

MACAULAY'S
LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

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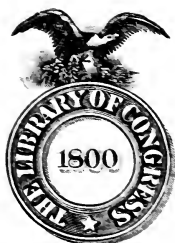
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FREDERICK H. SYKES, PH.D.

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

The Scribner English Classics

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Lord Macaulay

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The Scribner English Classics

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

ARTHUR BEATTY, PH.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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MACAULAY

THE dreamy rhymer's measured snore
Falls heavy on our ear no more;
And by long strides are left behind
The dear delights of woman-kind,
Who win their battles like their loves,
In satin waistcoats and kid gloves,
And have achieved the crowning work
When they have trussed and skewered a Turk.

Another comes with stouter tread,
And stalks among the statelier dead.
He rushes on, and hails by turns
High-crested Scott, broad-breasted Burns,
And shows the British youth, who ne'er
Will lag behind, what Romans were,
When all the Tuscans and their Lars
Shouted, and shook the towers of Mars.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

“HE who calls departed ages back again into being, enjoys a bliss like that of creating: it were a great thing, if I could scatter the mist that lies upon this most excellent portion of ancient story, and could spread a clear light over it; so that the Romans shall stand before the eyes of my readers, distinct, intelligible, familiar as contemporaries, with their institutions and the vicissitudes of their destiny, living and moving.”

—B. G. NIEBUHR, *The History of Rome*, I, p. 5.



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INTRODUCTION

I. OUTLINE OF MACAULAY'S LIFE

- 1800, October 25. Thomas Babington Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. His father, Zachary Macaulay, was a Scotch Calvinist, and was devoted to the cause of anti-slavery.
1818. Macaulay entered Trinity College, Cambridge.
1819. Won the Chancellor's medal for English verse.
1821. Won the Craven Scholarship and the Chancellor's medal for English verse.
1822. Received the degree of B.A.
1824. Elected a fellow of Trinity College.
1825. Wrote the *Essay on Milton*, his first essay in *The Edinburgh Review*.
1826. Called to the Bar. Became a regular contributor to *The Edinburgh Review*, and until 1844 published many essays in that periodical.
1830. Elected a member of Parliament for Calne.
1834. Went to India as a member of the Council for India.
1838. Returned from India.
1839. Elected to Parliament from Edinburgh.
1840. Published his *Essay on Lord Clive*.
1841. Published his *Essay on Warren Hastings*.
1842. Published his *Lays of Ancient Rome*.
1843. Published his *Essays* in book form.

1844. Published his *Essay on the Earl of Chatham*, the last essay which he wrote for *The Edinburgh Review*.
He then devoted himself to his *History of England*.
1848. Published Volumes I and II of the *History of England*.
1855. Published Volumes III and IV of the *History of England*.
1857. Made Baron Macaulay of Rothley.
- 1859, December 28. Died, and was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

II. THE BALLAD REVIVAL

During the latter half of the eighteenth century in England there was in progress a transformation in literary taste, which produced the important result of bringing about a very great change in the literature and art of the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the earlier half of the eighteenth century polish and regularity were the characteristics which were admired and demanded in poetry, with the accompanying dislike of all that was irregular and impassioned. Literature dealt with the polished society of the time, and did not seek subjects that were in any degree different in kind from those with which the people of the time were well acquainted from personal daily experience. Man was dealt with as a perfectly civilized creature, and not as a savage or uncultivated man; and the thoughts and emotions that were depicted were the thoughts and emotions of the cultivated eighteenth century. But this regularity of form and subject grew monotonous and distasteful; other subjects and a new style gradually crept into the poetry of the latter half of the century, until at its closing years literature was almost entirely transformed. A world of strange superstitions, of violent passions, of strange heroes, of demi-gods, came into being, and displaced the old one of polished, civilized heroes. The wonderful and marvellous came as a new and welcome sensation to minds jaded by the cold reason and smoothness of eighteenth century verse; and as the wonderful and the strange and the marvellous were all found in abundance in the

ballad,¹ that form of poetry attracted a great deal of attention in the literary world. The ballads seemed to open up a new world of incident and feeling, and reminded their readers of the early age of man, such as Homer painted it; and presented to their eyes and ears what seemed to them to be the sights and music of the early golden age of the world, before man had submitted himself to the trammels of civilized, artificial society. This is the way in which the ballad is regarded by Addison in the exposition and defence of the ballad of *Chevy Chace* which he wrote for his *Spectator* in the early years of the eighteenth century; and the opinion expressed so early by Addison became the prevalent one in its later years. The ballad, the romance, the story of mediæval castles and heroes, and the tale of chivalry all came into their own by the end of the century.

The taste for the ballad is shown by the great number of collections that were published. The first great collection was made by Ambrose Phillips in three volumes, which he published in 1723-1725. This was followed forty years later by the famous collection by Bishop Percy, the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, published in 1765. This great collection was a very powerful influence in turning the taste of the people toward the ballad and legend, and in making the public acquainted with the real beauty and force of popular poetry. To be sure, there were many poems in Percy's volumes which cannot be called ballads; but the public felt that the material was new and strange enough to satisfy them; and so no one except the antiquarian Joseph Ritson raised any question as to the nature of the contents. The book attained an European reputation, and was enormously influential in spreading a taste for popular ballads and tales, strange and distant beliefs and customs, and the general love of the wonderful. But, for the purposes of English literature and for the purposes of the subject immediately in hand, we must consider the influence of the book on Scott, as he later became a determining influence on public taste. At the

¹ A ballad is a lyrical narrative poem, of unknown authorship, popular in origin, or cast in the common forms of popular poetry, and fitted in form and content for oral circulation in a popular community. It was usually sung and frequently accompanied by the dance. Examples of nearly all the ballad-types will be found in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge (U. S.) edition, 1904).

age of thirteen he lighted upon the volumes of the *Reliques*, and in these words he tells us of the effect which they had upon him:

“I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a large platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor. The summer day sped onward so fast that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. Henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows and all who would hearken to me with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, that I could scrape a few shillings together, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently or with half the enthusiasm.”

The results in the field of poetry were twofold: in 1802–1803 he published two volumes of ballads which he and his helpers had collected during a number of years, under the title, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This work gathered the waifs and strays of popular song and tradition current among the peasantry of that portion of Scotland adjacent to the English border; and in richness of content and extent of influence is second only to the *Reliques* itself. The second result of the study of Percy was the series of narrative poems in the ballad style, beginning with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in 1805, and ending with *Harold the Dauntless* in 1816; and the series of short poems in the ballad style, which approximate in actual length and in their brief and suggestive treatment, to the real popular ballad. He began his work in the briefer form by translating Bürger's *Lenore* from the German, and after a few further experiments in translation went on to the production of original ballads, such as *Alice Brand* in *The Lady of the Lake*.

In spite of the fact that Scott found in the ballad the model according to which he could best work in verse, he saw the limitations of the ballad stanza. In the Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* he points out its chief weakness, showing that the four-line stanza form is likely to be monotonous in a poem of any length. This is true of such stanzas as the following, in spite of their excellence:

The wind blew loud, the waves rose hie
 And dashed the boat on shore;
 Fair Annie's corpse was in the faem,
 The babe rose never more.

Lord Gregory tore his gowden locks
 And made a wafu' moan;
 Fair Annie's corpse lay at his feet,
 His bonny son was gone.

O cherry, cherry was her cheek,
 And gowden was her hair,
 And coral, coral was her lips,
 Nane might with them compare!
 —*The Lass of Rochroyal.*

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
 Drinking the blude-reid wine:
 "O whar will I get guid sailor,
 To sail this ship of mine?"

Up and spake an eldern knight,
 Sat at the king's richt knee:
 "Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
 That sails upon the sea."

The king has written a braid letter,
 And signed it with his hand,
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
 Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
 A loud laugh laughed he;
 The next line that Sir Patrick read,
 The tear blinded his ee.

—*Sir Patrick Spence.*

How to preserve this stanza and at the same time to rid it of its monotony was first suggested to Scott by Coleridge. Scott had heard portions of *Christabel*, and was attracted by the variations of rhyme and metre which he found there, for out of the simple ballad line and stanza Coleridge obtained the most wonderful metrical effects, such as these:

The lady sprang up suddenly,
 The lovely lady, Christabel!
 It moaned as near, as near can be,
 But what it is she cannot tell.—
 On the other side it seems to be,
 Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
 Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
 There is wind enough in the air
 To move away the ringlet curl
 From the lovely lady's cheek—
 There is not wind enough to twirl
 The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
 That dances as often as dance it can,
 Hanging so light and hanging so high,
 On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

On this type of verse Scott based his own metrical practice; and Macaulay, in turn, tells us at the end of his Preface to the *Lays of Ancient Rome* that he borrowed from Scott. Macaulay, however, adopts the verse with three accents rather than the verse with four, though some of his lines have four feet. In this way his stanza form reads more like that of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and the common ballad form than *Christabel* and the longer poems of Scott:

But the Consul's brow was sad,
 And the Consul's speech was low,
 And darkly looked he at the wall,
 And darkly at the foe.
 "Their van will be upon us
 Before the bridge goes down;
 And if they once may win the bridge,
 What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,
 The Captain of the Gate:
 "To every man upon this earth
 Death cometh soon or late.
 And how can man die better
 Than facing fearful odds,
 For the ashes of his fathers
 And the temples of his gods."

The *Lays* are well represented in this passage from *Horatius*: they have the force and vigorous simplicity of Scott, with the directness of the ballad, combined with the free stanza-form of Coleridge. They have numerous repetitions in phrase and word as have the ballads, though this peculiarity is as much a characteristic of Homer as of the ballads. Above all, the *Lays* are real narratives, like the ballads, telling brave stories for the sake of the stories, placing the stress on the stories themselves, with little or no comment on them. The emotion which is aroused by the story is not made anything of, but is passed over with little notice. Thus they are objective poetry, dealing with the event that is narrated; not lyric poetry, dealing with feeling or emotion. In this particular they are closely modelled on the ballad, and in so far must be regarded as a successful attempt to transform some part of Roman legend back again into the lost ballad-poetry of the ancient city.

III. THE SOURCES OF MACAULAY'S "LAYS"

In the previous section we have traced the sources whence Macaulay derived his verse-form and general style of poetic art: there still remain to be considered the sources of the material of the *Lays* and the general spirit in which the Roman legends are treated. From this point of view the *Lays* are the outcome of a new method of approach in a field distinct from the ballad but somewhat closely related to it. This was the field of the early history of Rome. In the days before the introduction of the critical method into early Roman history, the stories of Romulus and Remus, of Horatius, of Virginia, and of a long list of heroes and their deeds, were regarded for the most part as sober fact. But research and comparative studies, begun on an extended scale only in the early years of the nineteenth century, first threw doubt on their credibility, and finally discredited them as records of fact, relegating them to the region of the mythical and the legendary. The chief representative of this school of historians of Rome was Professor B. G. Niebuhr,¹ who carried out this

¹ B. G. Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*. Vols. I and II, 1831 and 1832, translated by Julius Charles Hare, M.A., and Connop Thirlwall, M.A.; Vol. III, 1842, translated by William Smith, Ph. D., and Leonhard Schmidt, Ph.D.

method of comparison and analysis more thoroughly than any one else. He was accepted as leader by the chief historians of Rome in England; and what is especially important for us, his results were implicitly accepted by Macaulay. His *History of Rome*, the first volume of which was published in Germany in 1826, was translated into English by two representative scholars in 1831; the other two volumes appearing in English in 1832 and 1842.

We will now give a brief summary of Niebuhr's principles and theories, making a free use of his own words.

According to his theory, the stories of early Rome are purely legendary and imaginative, and not historical in any sense. In the earliest days of the city, popular bards sang the deeds of heroes; and these songs a later and less imaginative age turned into prose. These legends were handed down from generation to generation in lays, which were sung at banquets to the flute.

"The guests themselves sang in turn; so it was expected that the lays, as being the common property of the nation, should be known to every free citizen. According to Varro, who calls them old, they were sung by modest boys, sometimes to the flute, sometimes without music. The peculiar function of the *Cammenae* (lays) was to sing the praises of the ancients; and among the rest those of the kings. For never did republican Rome strip herself of the recollection of them, any more than she removed their statues from the Capitol: in the best times of her freedom their memory was revered and celebrated."

Arguing from the well-known fact that there are heroic lays in Scotland, in Spain, in Germany, and that the lays of the Serrians and of the Greeks were well known in his day, he proceeds to the statement that there must have been ballads in ancient Rome.

"If any one does not discern the traces of such lays in the epical part of Roman story, he may continue blind to them: he will be left more and more alone every day: there can be no going backward on this point for generations."

"The poems out of which what we call the history of the Roman kings was resolved into a prose narrative were . . . of great extent; consisting partly of lays united into a uniform

whole, partly of detached ones without any necessary connection. The story of Romulus is an epos by itself: on Numa there can only have been short lays. Tullus, the story of the Horatii, and the destruction of Alba, form an epical whole, like the poem of Romulus: indeed Livy has here preserved a fragment of the poem unaltered, in the lyrical numbers of the old Roman verse. On the other hand, in what is related of Ancus there is not a touch of poetical coloring. But afterward with L. Tarquinius Priscus a great poem begins, which ends with the battle of Regillus; and this lay of the Tarquins even in its prose shape is inexpressibly poetical; nor is it less unlike real history. The arrival of Tarquinius the Lucumo at Rome; his deeds and victories; his death; then the marvellous story of Servius; Tullia's impious nuptials; the murder of the just king; the whole story of the last Tarquinius; the warning presage of his fall; Lucretia; the assumed idiocy of Brutus; his death; the war with Porsenna; in the last place, the truly Homeric battle of Regillus; all this forms an epos, which in force and brilliance of imagination leaves everything produced by the Romans in later times far behind it. A stranger to the unity which characterizes the most perfect of Greek poems, it divides itself into sections, answering to the *adventures* in the *Lay of the Nibelungen*: and should any one ever have the boldness to think of restoring it in a poetical form, he would make a great mistake in selecting any other than that of this noble work."¹

To have reconstituted the whole of this body of ancient legendary poem would have been a great task; and Macaulay attempted only four out of the many possible lays. But it must be clear to any one who reads the foregoing account of Niebuhr how completely Macaulay works in his spirit. This is shown both in the Preface to the *Lays* as well as in the poems themselves. The *Lays of Ancient Rome* are the result of the profound scholarship of Niebuhr and the brilliant, rhetorical genius of Macaulay.

In this way Macaulay occupies a distinct place among the balladists of the nineteenth century: Wordsworth attempts to make common things poetical by throwing over them a coloring

¹ *History of Rome* (English Translation), Vol. I, pp. 251-256.

of imagination; Coleridge makes the strange and uncanny seem credible and familiar; Southey celebrates far-off heroes of strange and vaguely gigantic mould; Campbell celebrates in stirring strains the heroic history of England; and Aytoun recalls the feats of the renowned and romantic Scottish cavaliers. To Macaulay belongs the distinction of making alive the old legendary Roman heroes in the familiar ballad measure, so that they have become almost a part of the heroic story of the English-speaking race.

IV. THE "LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME"

The small volume containing the *Lays of Ancient Rome* was published in 1842, and at once became a very popular book. Trevelyan, in his *Life of Lord Macaulay*, says that eighteen thousand copies were sold in ten years; forty thousand in twenty years; and that by June, 1875, upward of a hundred thousand had passed into the hands of readers. These figures show that the *Lays* suited the popular taste for poems in the ballad style, and this fact is further shown by the very favorable reviews which were accorded them. John Stuart Mill compares them with the work of Scott and Campbell, saying that they are more like these than the real ballads and epics of an earlier age. The old bard did everything by single touches; Scott and Macaulay by repetition and accumulation of particulars.

"They produce all effect by what they *say*; he by what he *suggested*—by what he stimulated the imagination to paint for itself. But then the old ballads were not written for the light reading of tired readers. To do the work in their way, they required to be brooded over, or had at least the aid of time and of impassioned recitation. Stories which are to be told to children in the age of eagerness and excitability, or sung in banquet halls to assembled warriors, whose daily ideas and feelings supply a flood of comment ready to gush forth on the slightest hint of the poet, cannot fly too swift and straight to the mark. But Mr. Macaulay wrote only to be read, and by readers for whom it was necessary to do all."

He further praises Macaulay for his services to history, in that

he has made familiar "that true conception of early Roman history, the irrefragible establishment of which has made Niebuhr famous."¹

John Wilson, "Christopher North," praised the fire, strength, and directness of the *Lays*; and noted the learning of the author who was able to produce them. He noted, too, that the style and spirit of the poems were the style and spirit of Sir Walter Scott.

"Sir Walter would have rejoiced in Horatius as if he had been a doughty Douglas.

Now by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tides of flight.

That is the way of doing business! A cut-and-thrust style, without any flourish. Scott's style when his blood was up, and the first words came like a vanguard impatient for battle. . . . It is a great merit of these poems that they are free from ambition or exaggeration. Nothing seems overdone—no tawdry piece of finery disfigures the simplicity of the plan that has been chosen. They seem to have been framed with great artistic skill—with much self-denial and abstinence from anything incongruous—and with a very successful imitation of the effects intended to be represented. Yet every here and there images of beauty and expressions of feeling are thrown out, that are wholly independent of Rome or the Romans and that appeal to the widest sensibilities of the human heart. In point of homeliness of thought and language, there is often a boldness which none but a man conscious of great powers of writing would have ventured to show."²

This chorus of praise was interrupted with the change of taste; and the reaction in opinion is most clearly shown by Matthew Arnold. In his opinion the *Lays* are "pinchbeck," and they are marked by a "hard, metallic movement." "Let me frankly say," he exclaims, "that, to my mind, a man's power

¹ *Westminster Review*, Vol. XXXIX (February, 1843).

² *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol. LII.

to detect the false metal in those Lays is a good measure of his fitness to give an opinion about poetical matters at all—I say, Lord Macaulay's

‘To all the men upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late,’

is hard to read without a cry of pain.”¹

This is harsh criticism; and if by “pinchbeck” Arnold intended to imply any insincerity or pretence in the poems, he surely must have misread them. The reason that these lines from *Horatius* pained him must be that he was heart-sick with ballad imitations of Homer and so with all ballad imitations whatsoever. But not all later critics agree with Arnold; and even if they did, the testimony of youth would override them all. For youth has always been charmed by the *Lays*, whenever it has had an opportunity to hear the simple, direct vigor of the verse, and to feel the frank simplicity of the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Civic patriotism in *Horatius*; personal bravery and the charm that surrounds fighting gods and fighting men in *The Battle of Lake Regillus*; tender pathos and paternal and filial and neighborly love in *Virginia*; and a long roll-call of glory in *The Prophecy of Capys*;—surely here is an abundance of good matter for the nurture of the spirit and of the imagination, which cannot fail to develop in youth the love for the best in life and literature. To be sure, the *Lays* do not possess the very finest things in literature, but they are sound as far as they go; and are stepping-stones from the more lowly things to higher.

No juster judgment has been pronounced on Macaulay than by Sir Leslie Stephen:

“He understands most thoroughly the value of concentration, unity, and simplicity. Every speech or essay forms an artistic whole, in which some distinct moral is vigorously driven home by a succession of downright blows. This strong rhetorical instinct is shown conspicuously in the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which, whatever we may say of them as poetry, are an admirable specimen of rhymed rhetoric. We know how good they

¹ *Lectures on Translating Homer.*

are when we see how incapable are modern ballad-writers in general of putting the same swing and fire into their verse. . . . There are, of course, many living poets who can do tolerably something of far higher quality which Macaulay could not do at all. But I don't know who, since Scott, could have done this particular thing." ¹

It would be impossible to give in any other form a better idea of Macaulay's purpose and method than he himself has given in his Preface to the *Lays*. The pupil or teacher who wishes to enter into the author's spirit cannot do better than read what he has there set down in detail. To the author's own Preface which follows all readers are therefore referred.

MACAULAY'S PREFACE TO THE "LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME"

THAT what is called the history of the Kings and early Consuls of Rome is to a great extent fabulous, few scholars have, since the time of Beaufort, ventured to deny. It is certain that, more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city, the public records were, with scarcely an exception, destroyed by the Gauls. It is certain that the oldest annals of the commonwealth were compiled more than a century and a half after this destruction of the records. It is certain, therefore, that the great Latin writers of the Augustan age did not possess those materials, without which a trustworthy account of the infancy of the republic could not possibly be framed. Those writers own, indeed, that the chronicles to which they had access were filled with battles that were never fought, and Consuls that were never inaugurated; and we have abundant proof that, in these chronicles, events of the greatest importance, such as the issue of the war with Porsena, and the issue of the war with Brennus, were grossly misrepresented. Under these circumstances, a wise man will look with great suspicion on the legend which has come down to us. He will perhaps be inclined to regard the princes who are said to have founded the civil and religious institutions of Rome, the

¹ *Hours in a Library*, I.

son of Mars, and the husband of Egeria, as mere mythological personages, of the same class with Perseus and Ixion. As he draws nearer and nearer to the confines of authentic history, he will become less and less hard of belief. He will admit that the most important parts of the narrative have some foundation in truth. But he will distrust almost all the details, not only because they seldom rest on any solid evidence, but also because he will constantly detect in them, even when they are within the limits of physical possibility, that peculiar character, more easily understood than defined, which distinguishes the creations of the imagination from the realities of the world in which we live.

The early history of Rome is indeed far more poetical than anything else in Latin literature. The loves of the Vestal and the God of War, the cradle laid among the reeds of Tiber, the fig-tree, the she-wolf, the shepherd's cabin, the recognition, the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the death of Tarpeia, the fall of Hostus Hostilius, the struggle of Mettus Curtius through the marsh, the women rushing with torn raiment and dishevelled hair between their fathers and their husbands, the nightly meetings of Numa and the Nymph by the well in the sacred grove, the fight of the three Romans and the three Albans, the purchase of the Sibylline books, the crime of Tullia, the simulated madness of Brutus, the ambiguous reply of the Delphian oracle to the Tarquins, the wrongs of Lucretia, the heroic actions of Horatius Cocles, of Scævola, and of Clœlia, the battle of Regillus won by the aid of Castor and Pollux, the defence of Cremera, the touching story of Coriolanus, the still more touching story of Virginia, the wild legend about the draining of the Alban lake, the combat between Valerius Corvus and the gigantic Gaul, are among the many instances which will at once suggest themselves to every reader.

In the narrative of Livy, who was a man of fine imagination, these stories retain much of their genuine character. Nor could even the tasteless Dionysius distort and mutilate them into mere prose. The poetry shines, in spite of him, through the dreary pedantry of his eleven books. It is discernible in the most tedious and in the most superficial modern works on the early times of

Rome. It enlivens the dulness of the Universal History, and gives a charm to the most meagre abridgments of Goldsmith.

Even in the age of Plutarch there were discerning men who rejected the popular account of the foundation of Rome, because that account appeared to them to have the air, not of a history, but of a romance or a drama. Plutarch, who was displeased at their incredulity, had nothing better to say in reply to their arguments than that chance sometimes turns poet, and produces trains of events not to be distinguished from the most elaborate plots which are constructed by art. But though the existence of a poetical element in the early history of the Great City was detected so many years ago, the first critic who distinctly saw from what source that poetical element had been derived was James Perizonius, one of the most acute and learned antiquaries of the seventeenth century. His theory, which, in his own days, attracted little or no notice, was revived in the present generation by Niebuhr, a man who would have been the first writer of his time, if his talent for communicating truths had borne any proportion to his talent for investigating them. That theory has been adopted by several eminent scholars of our own country, particularly by the Bishop of St. David's, by Professor Malden, and by the lamented Arnold. It appears to be now generally received by men conversant with classical antiquity; and indeed it rests on such strong proofs, both internal and external, that it will not be easily subverted. A popular exposition of this theory, and of the evidence by which it is supported, may not be without interest even for readers who are unacquainted with the ancient languages.

The Latin literature which has come down to us is of later date than the commencement of the Second Punic War, and consists almost exclusively of works fashioned on Greek models. The Latin metres, heroic, elegiac, lyric, and dramatic, are of Greek origin. The best Latin epic poetry is the feeble echo of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The best Latin eclogues are imitations of Theocritus. The plan of the most finished didactic poem in the Latin tongue was taken from Hesiod. The Latin tragedies are bad copies of the masterpieces of Sophocles and Euripides. The Latin comedies are free translations from Demophilus,

Menander, and Apollodorus. The Latin philosophy was borrowed, without alteration, from the Portico and the Academy; and the great Latin orators constantly proposed to themselves as patterns the speeches of Demosthenes and Lysias.

But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished, which had, indeed, almost wholly perished long before those whom we are in the habit of regarding as the greatest Latin writers were born. That literature abounded with metrical romances, such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing. All human beings not utterly savage long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind. But it is only in very enlightened communities that books are readily accessible. Metrical composition, therefore, which, in a highly civilized nation, is a mere luxury, is, in nations imperfectly civilized, almost a necessary of life, and is valued less on account of the pleasure which it gives to the ear, than on account of the help which it gives to the memory. A man who can invent or embellish an interesting story, and put it into a form which others may easily retain in their recollection, will always be highly esteemed by a people eager for amusement and information, but destitute of libraries. Such is the origin of ballad-poetry, a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to spring up and flourish in every society at a certain point in the progress toward refinement. Tacitus informs us that songs were the only memorials of the past which the ancient Germans possessed. We learn from Lucan and from Ammianus Marcellinus that the brave actions of the ancient Gauls were commemorated in the verses of Bards. During many ages, and through many revolutions, minstrelsy retained its influence over both the Teutonic and the Celtic race. The vengeance exacted by the spouse of Attila for the murder of Siegfried was celebrated in rhymes, of which Germany is still justly proud. The exploits of Athelstane were commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons, and those of Canute by the Danes, in rude poems, of which a few fragments have come down to us. The chants of the Welsh harpers preserved, through ages of darkness, a faint and doubt-

ful memory of Arthur. In the Highlands of Scotland may still be gleaned some relics of the old songs about Cuthullin and Fingal. The long struggle of the Servians against the Ottoman power was recorded in lays full of martial spirit. We learn from Herrera that, when a Peruvian Inca died, men of skill were appointed to celebrate him in verses, which all the people learned by heart, and sang in public on days of festival. The feats of Kurroglou, the great freebooter of Turkistan, recounted in ballads composed by himself, are known in every village of Northern Persia. Captain Beechey heard the Bards of the Sandwich Islands recite the heroic achievements of Tamehameha, the most illustrious of their kings. Mungo Park found in the heart of Africa a class of singing-men, the only annalists of their rude tribes, and heard them tell the story of the victory which Damel, the negro prince of the Jaloffs, won over Abdulkader, the Mussulman tyrant of Foota Torra. This species of poetry attained a high degree of excellence among the Castilians, before they began to copy Tuscan patterns. It attained a still higher degree of excellence among the English and the Lowland Scotch, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. But it reached its full perfection in ancient Greece; for there can be no doubt that the great Homeric poems are generically ballads, though widely distinguished from all other ballads, and indeed from almost all other human compositions, by transcendent sublimity and beauty.

As it is agreeable to general experience that, at a certain stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should flourish, so is it also agreeable to general experience that, at a subsequent stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should be undervalued and neglected. Knowledge advances: manners change: great foreign models of composition are studied and imitated. The phraseology of the old minstrels becomes obsolete. Their versification, which, having received its laws only from the ear, abounds in irregularities, seems licentious and uncouth. Their simplicity appears beggarly when compared with the quaint forms and gaudy coloring of such artists as Cowley and Gongora. The ancient lays, unjustly despised by the learned and polite, linger for a time in the memory of the vulgar, and are at

length too often irretrievably lost. We cannot wonder that the ballads of Rome should have altogether disappeared, when we remember how very narrowly, in spite of the invention of printing, those of our own country and those of Spain escaped the same fate. There is indeed little doubt that oblivion covers many English songs equal to any that were published by Bishop Percy, and many Spanish songs as good as the best of those which have been so happily translated by Mr. Lockhart. Eighty years ago England possessed only one tattered copy of *Childe Waters and Sir Cauline*, and Spain only one tattered copy of the noble poem of the *Cid*. The snuff of a candle, or a mischievous dog, might in a moment have deprived the world forever of any of those fine compositions. Sir Walter Scott, who united to the fire of a great poet the minute curiosity and patient diligence of a great antiquary, was but just in time to save the precious relics of the *Minstrelsy of the Border*. In Germany, the lay of the *Nibelungs* had been long utterly forgotten, when, in the eighteenth century, it was, for the first time, printed from a manuscript in the old library of a noble family. In truth, the only people who, through their whole passage from simplicity to the highest civilization, never for a moment ceased to love and admire their old ballads, were the Greeks.

That the early Romans should have had ballad-poetry, and that this poetry should have perished, is therefore not strange. It would, on the contrary, have been strange if these things had not come to pass; and we should be justified in pronouncing them highly probable, even if we had no direct evidence on the subject. But we have direct evidence of unquestionable authority.

Ennius, who flourished in the time of the Second Punic War, was regarded in the Augustan age as the father of Latin poetry. He was, in truth, the father of the second school of Latin poetry, the only school of which the works have descended to us. But from Ennius himself we learn that there were poets who stood to him in the same relation in which the author of the romance of Count Alarcos stood to Garcilaso, or the author of the *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode* to Lord Surrey. Ennius speaks of verses which the Fauns and the Bards were wont to chant in the old

time, when none had yet studied the graces of speech, when none had yet climbed the peaks sacred to the Goddesses of Grecian song. "Where," Cicero mournfully asks, "are those old verses now?"

Contemporary with Ennius was Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest of the Roman annalists. His account of the infancy and youth of Romulus and Remus has been preserved by Dionysius, and contains a very remarkable reference to the ancient Latin poetry. Fabius says that, in his time, his countrymen were still in the habit of singing ballads about the Twins. "Even in the hut of Faustulus,"—so these old lays appear to have run—"the children of Rhea and Mars were, in port and in spirit, not like unto swineherds or cowherds, but such that men might well guess them to be of the blood of Kings and Gods."

Cato the Censor, who also lived in the days of the Second Punic War, mentioned this lost literature in his lost work on the antiquities of his country. Many ages, he said, before his time, there were ballads in praise of illustrious men; and these ballads it was the fashion for the guests at banquets to sing in turn while the piper played. "Would," exclaims Cicero, "that we still had the old ballads of which Cato speaks!"

Valerius Maximus gives us exactly similar information, without mentioning his authority, and observes that the ancient Roman ballads were probably of more benefit to the young than all the lectures of the Athenian schools, and that to the influence of the national poetry were to be ascribed the virtues of such men as Camillus and Fabricius.

Varro, whose authority on all questions connected with the antiquities of his country is entitled to the greatest respect, tells us that at banquets it was once the fashion for boys to sing, sometimes with and sometimes without instrumental music, ancient ballads in praise of men of former times. These young performers, he observes, were of unblemished character, a circumstance which he probably mentioned because, among the Greeks, and indeed in his time among the Romans also, the morals of singing-boys were in no high repute.

The testimony of Horace, though given incidentally, confirms the statements of Cato, Valerius Maximus, and Varro. The

poet predicts that, under the peaceful administration of Augustus, the Romans will, over their full goblets, sing to the pipe, after the fashion of their fathers, the deeds of brave captains and the ancient legends touching the origin of the city.

The proposition, then, that Rome had ballad-poetry, is not merely in itself highly probable, but is fully proved by direct evidence of the greatest weight.

This proposition being established, it becomes easy to understand why the early history of the city is unlike almost everything else in Latin literature, native where almost everything else is borrowed, imaginative where almost everything else is prosaic. We can scarcely hesitate to pronounce that the magnificent, pathetic, and truly national legends, which present so striking a contrast to all that surrounds them, are broken and defaced fragments of that early poetry which, even in the age of Cato the Censor, had become antiquated, and of which Tully had never heard a line.

That this poetry should have been suffered to perish will not appear strange when we consider how complete was the triumph of the Greek genius over the public mind of Italy. It is probable that, at an early period, Homer and Herodotus furnished some hints to the Latin minstrels;¹ but it was not till after the war with Pyrrhus that the poetry of Rome began to put off its old Ausonian character. The transformation was soon consummated. The conquered, says Horace, led captive the conquerors. It was precisely at the time at which the Roman people rose to unrivalled political ascendancy that they stooped to pass under the intellectual yoke. It was precisely at the time at which the sceptre departed from Greece that the empire of her language and of her arts became universal and despotic. The revolution indeed was not effected without a struggle. Nævius seems to have been the last of the ancient line of poets. Ennius was the founder of a new dynasty. Nævius celebrated the First Punic War in Saturnian verse, the old national verse of Italy. Ennius sang the Second Punic War in numbers borrowed from the *Iliad*. The elder poet, in the epitaph which he wrote for himself, and which is a fine specimen of the early

¹ See the Preface to the *Lay of the Battle of Regillus*

Roman diction and versification, plaintively boasted that the Latin language had died with him. Thus what to Horace appeared to be the first faint dawn of Roman literature, appeared to Nævius to be its hopeless setting. In truth, one literature was setting, and another dawning.

The victory of the foreign taste was decisive: and indeed we can hardly blame the Romans for turning away with contempt from the rude lays which had delighted their fathers, and giving their whole admiration to the immortal productions of Greece. The national romances, neglected by the great and the refined whose education had been finished at Rhodes or Athens, continued, it may be supposed, during some generations, to delight the vulgar. While Vergil, in hexameters of exquisite modulation, described the sports of rustics, those rustics were still singing their wild Saturnian ballads. It is not improbable that, at the time when Cicero lamented the irreparable loss of the poems mentioned by Cato, a search among the nooks of the Apennines, as active as the search which Sir Walter Scott made among the descendants of the mossstroopers of Liddesdale, might have brought to light many fine remains of ancient minstrelsy. No such search was made. The Latin ballads perished forever. Yet discerning critics have thought that they could still perceive in the early history of Rome numerous fragments of this lost poetry, as the traveller on classic ground sometimes finds, built into the heavy wall of a fort or convent, a pillar rich with acanthus leaves, or a frieze where the Amazons and Bacchanals seem to live. The theatres and temples of the Greek and the Roman were degraded into the quarries of the Turk and the Goth. Even so did the ancient Saturnian poetry become the quarry in which a crowd of orators and annalists found the materials of their prose.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which the old songs were transmuted into the form which they now wear. Funeral panegyric and chronicle appear to have been the intermediate links which connected the lost ballads with the histories now extant. From a very early period it was the usage that an oration should be pronounced over the remains of a noble Roman. The orator, as we learn from Polybius, was expected, on such an

occasion, to recapitulate all the services which the ancestors of the deceased had, from the earliest time, rendered to the commonwealth. There can be little doubt that the speaker on whom this duty was imposed would make use of all the stories suited to his purpose which were to be found in the popular lays. There can be as little doubt that the family of an eminent man would preserve a copy of the speech which had been pronounced over his corpse. The compilers of the early chronicles would have recourse to these speeches; and the great historians of a later period would have recourse to the chronicles.

It may be worth while to select a particular story, and to trace its probable progress through these stages. The description of the migration of the Fabian house to Cremera is one of the finest of the many fine passages which lie thick in the earlier books of Livy. The Consul, clad in his military garb, stands in the vestibule of his house, marshalling his clan, three hundred and six fighting men, all of the same proud patrician blood, all worthy to be attended by the fasces, and to command the legions. A sad and anxious retinue of friends accompanies the adventurers through the streets; but the voice of lamentation is drowned by the shouts of admiring thousands. As the procession passes the Capitol, prayers and vows are poured forth, but in vain. The devoted band, leaving Janus on the right, marches to its doom through the Gate of Evil Luck. After achieving high deeds of valor against overwhelming numbers, all perish save one child, the stock from which the great Fabian race was destined again to spring for the safety and glory of the commonwealth. That this fine romance, the details of which are so full of poetical truth, and so utterly destitute of all show of historical truth, came originally from some lay which had often been sung with great applause at banquets, is in the highest degree probable. Nor is it difficult to imagine a mode in which the transmission might have taken place.

The celebrated Quintus Fabius Maximus, who died about twenty years before the First Punic War, and more than forty years before Ennius was born, is said to have been interred with extraordinary pomp. In the eulogy pronounced over his body all the great exploits of his ancestors were doubtless recounted

and exaggerated. If there were then extant songs which gave a vivid and touching description of an event, the saddest and the most glorious in the long history of the Fabian house, nothing could be more natural than that the panegyrist should borrow from such songs their finest touches, in order to adorn his speech. A few generations later the songs would perhaps be forgotten, or remembered only by shepherds and vine-dressers. But the speech would certainly be preserved in the archives of the Fabian nobles. Fabius Pictor would be well acquainted with a document so interesting to his personal feelings, and would insert large extracts from it in his rude chronicle. That chronicle, as we know, was the oldest to which Livy had access. Livy would at a glance distinguish the bold strokes of the forgotten poet from the dull and feeble narrative by which they were surrounded, would retouch them with a delicate and powerful pencil, and would make them immortal.

That this might happen at Rome can scarcely be doubted; for something very like this has happened in several countries, and, among others, in our own. Perhaps the theory of Perizonius cannot be better illustrated than by showing that what he supposes to have taken place in ancient times has, beyond all doubt, taken place in modern times.

“History,” says Hume with the utmost gravity, “has preserved some instances of Edgar’s amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest.” He then tells very agreeably the stories of Elfreda and Elfrida, two stories which have a most suspicious air of romance, and which indeed greatly resemble, in their general character, some of the legends of early Rome. He cites, as his authority for these two tales, the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, who lived in the time of King Stephen. The great majority of readers suppose that the device by which Elfrida was substituted for her young mistress, the artifice by which Athelwold obtained the hand of Elfrida, the detection of that artifice, the hunting party, and the vengeance of the amorous king, are things about which there is no more doubt than about the execution of Anne Boleyn, or the slitting of Sir John Coventry’s nose. But when we turn to William of Malmesbury, we find that Hume, in his eagerness to

relate these pleasant fables, has overlooked one very important circumstance. William does indeed tell both the stories; but he gives us distinct notice that he does not warrant their truth, and that they rest on no better authority than that of ballads.

Such is the way in which these two well-known tales have been handed down. They originally appeared in a poetical form. They found their way from ballads into an old chronicle. The ballads perished; the chronicle remained. A great historian, some centuries after the ballads had been altogether forgotten, consulted the chronicle. He was struck by the lively coloring of these ancient fictions; he transferred them to his pages; and thus we find inserted, as unquestionable facts, in a narrative which is likely to last as long as the English tongue, the inventions of some minstrel whose works were probably never committed to writing, whose name is buried in oblivion, and whose dialect has become obsolete. It must, then, be admitted to be possible, or rather highly probable, that the stories of Romulus and Remus, and of the Horatii and Curiatii, may have had a similar origin.

Castilian literature will furnish us with another parallel case. Mariana, the classical historian of Spain, tells the story of the ill-starred marriage which the King Don Alonso brought about between the heirs of Carrion and the two daughters of the Cid. The Cid bestowed a princely dower on his sons-in-law. But the young men were base and proud, cowardly and cruel. They were tried in danger, and found wanting. They fled before the Moors, and once, when a lion broke out of his den, they ran and crouched in an unseemly hiding-place. They knew that they were despised, and took counsel how they might be avenged. They parted from their father-in-law with many signs of love, and set forth on a journey with Doña Elvira and Doña Sol. In a solitary place the bridegrooms seized their brides, stripped them, scourged them, and departed, leaving them for dead. But one of the house of Bivar, suspecting foul play, had followed the travellers in disguise. The ladies were brought back safe to the house of their father. Complaint was made to the king. It was adjudged by the Cortes that the dower given by the Cid should be returned, and that the heirs of Carrion together with

one of their kindred should do battle against three knights of the party of the Cid. The guilty youths would have declined the combat; but all their shifts were vain. They were vanquished in the lists, and forever disgraced, while their injured wives were sought in marriage by great princes.

Some Spanish writers have labored to show, by an examination of dates and circumstances, that this story is untrue. Such confutation was surely not needed; for the narrative is on the face of it a romance. How it found its way into Mariana's history is quite clear. He acknowledges his obligations to the ancient chronicles; and had doubtless before him the *Cronica del famoso Cavallero Cid Ruy Diez Campeador*, which had been printed as early as the year 1552. He little suspected that all the most striking passages in this chronicle were copied from a poem of the twelfth century, a poem of which the language and versification had long been obsolete, but which glowed with no common portion of the fire of the *Iliad*. Yet such was the fact. More than a century and a half after the death of Mariana, this venerable ballad, of which one imperfect copy on parchment, four hundred years old, had been preserved at Bivar, was for the first time printed. Then it was found that every interesting circumstance of the story of the heirs of Carrion was derived by the eloquent Jesuit from a song of which he had never heard, and which was composed by a minstrel whose very name had long been forgotten.

Such, or nearly such, appears to have been the process by which the lost ballad-poetry of Rome was transformed into history. To reverse that process, to transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made, is the object of this work.

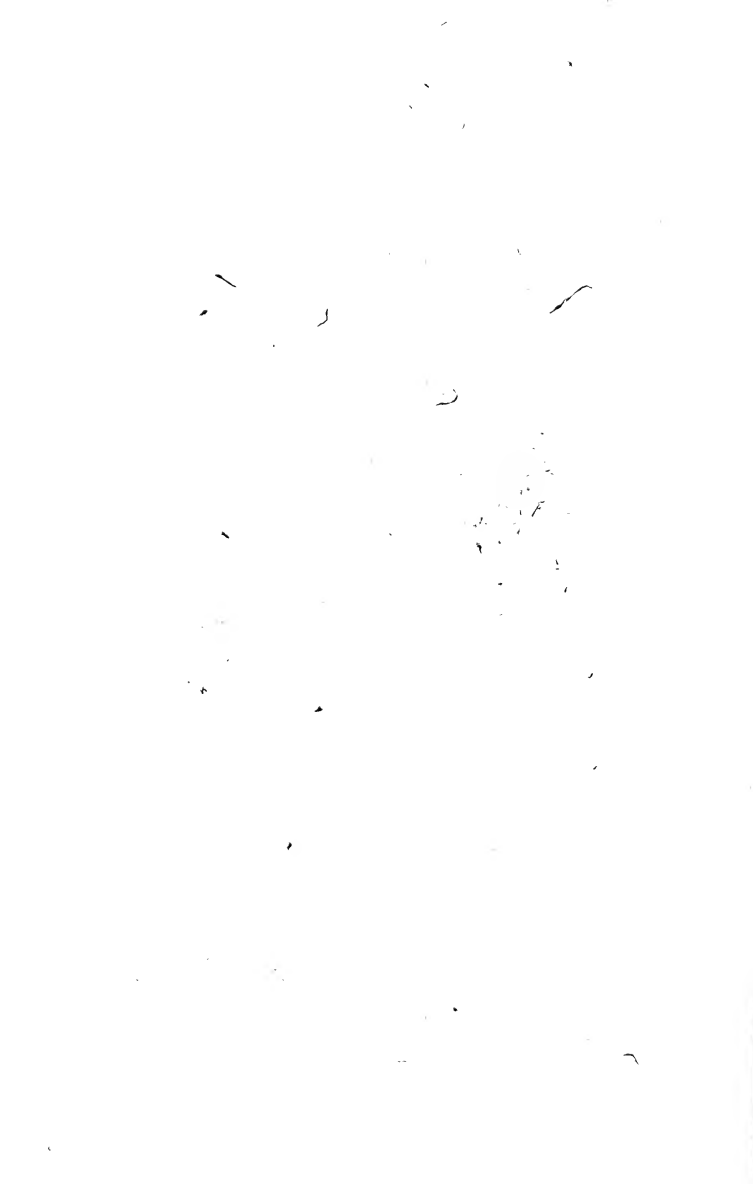
In the following poems the author speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels who know only what a Roman citizen, born three or four hundred years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in nowise above the passions and prejudices of their age and nation. To these imaginary poets must be ascribed some blunders which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out. The real blunder would have been to represent

these old poets as deeply versed in general history, and studious of chronological accuracy. To them must also be attributed the illiberal sneers at the Greeks, the furious party-spirit, the contempt for the arts of peace, the love of war for its own sake, the ungenerous exultation over the vanquished, which the reader will sometimes observe. To portray a Roman of the age of Camillus or Curius as superior to national antipathies, as mourning over the devastation and slaughter by which empire and triumphs were to be won, as looking on human suffering with the sympathy of Howard, or as treating conquered enemies with the delicacy of the Black Prince, would be to violate all dramatic propriety. The old Romans had some great virtues, fortitude, temperance, veracity, spirit to resist oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent patriotism; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them.

It would have been obviously improper to mimic the manner of any particular age or country. Something has been borrowed, however, from our own old ballads, and more from Sir Walter Scott, the great restorer of our ballad-poetry. To the *Iliad* still greater obligations are due; and those obligations have been contracted with the less hesitation, because there is reason to believe that some of the old Latin minstrels really had recourse to that inexhaustible store of poetical images.

It would have been easy to swell this little volume to a very considerable bulk, by appending notes filled with quotations; but to a learned reader such notes are not necessary; for an unlearned reader they would have little interest; and the judgment passed both by the learned and by the unlearned on a work of the imagination will always depend much more on the general character and spirit of such a work than on minute details.

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME



LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

HORATIUS

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX

I

LARS PORSENA of Clusium

By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.

By the Nine Gods he swore it, 5
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

II

East and west and south and north 10
The messengers ride fast,

And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.

Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home, 15
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

III

The horsemen and the footmen
 Are pouring in amain
 From many a stately market-place; 20
 From many a fruitful plain;
 From many a lonely hamlet,
 Which, hid by beech and pine,
 Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
 Of purple Apennine; 25

IV

From lordly Volaterrae,
 Where scowls the far-famed hold
 Piled by the hands of giants
 For godlike kings of old;
 From seagirt Populonia, 30
 Whose sentinels descri
 Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
 Fringing the southern sky;

V

From the proud mart of Pisae,
 Queen of the western waves, 35
 Where ride Massilia's triremes
 Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
 From where sweet Clanis wanders
 Through corn and vines and flowers;
 From where Cortona lifts to heaven 40
 Her diadem of towers.

VI

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill; 45
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

VII

But now no stroke of woodman 50
Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer; 55
Unharm'd the water-fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

VIII

The harvests of Arretium,
This year, old men shall reap,
This year, young boys in Umbro 60
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome. 65

IX

There be thirty chosen prophets,
 The wisest of the land,
 Who always by Lars Porsena
 Both morn and evening stand:
 Evening and morn the Thirty 70
 Have turned the verses o'er,
 Traced from the right on linen white
 By mighty seers of yore.

X

And with one voice the Thirty 75
 Have their glad answer given:
 "Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
 Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
 Go, and return in glory
 To Clusium's royal dome;
 And hang round Nurscia's altars 80
 The golden shields of Rome."

XI

And now hath every city
 Sent up her tale of men;
 The foot are fourscore thousand,
 The horse are thousands ten: 85
 Before the gates of Sutrium
 Is met the great array.
 A proud man was Lars Porsena
 Upon the trysting day.

XII

For all the Etruscan armies 90
 Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
 And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
 To join the muster came 95
The Tusculan Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name.

XIII

But by the yellow Tiber
 Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign 100
 To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
 The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
 Through two long nights and days. 105

XIV

For aged folks on crutches,
 And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
 That clung to them and smiled.
And sick men borne in litters 110
 High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
 With reaping-hooks and staves,

XV

And droves of mules and asses
 Laden with skins of wine, 115
 And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
 And endless herds of kine,
 And endless trains of wagons
 That creaked beneath the weight
 Of corn-sacks and of household goods, 120
 Choked every roaring gate.

XVI

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
 Could the wan burghers spy
 The line of blazing villages
 Red in the midnight sky. 125
 The Fathers of the City,
 They sat all night and day,
 For every hour some horseman came
 With tidings of dismay.

XVII

To eastward and to westward 130
 Have spread the Tuscan bands;
 Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecot
 In Crustumerium stands.
 Verbenna down to Ostia
 Hath wasted all the plain; 135
 Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
 And the stout guards are slain.

XXI

And nearer fast and nearer
 Doth the red whirlwind come;
 And louder still and still more loud,
 From underneath that rolling cloud, 165
 Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
 The trampling, and the hum.
 And plainly and more plainly
 Now through the gloom appears,
 Far to left and far to right, 170
 In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
 The long array of helmets bright,
 The long array of spears.

XXII

And plainly and more plainly,
 Above that glimmering line, 175
 Now might ye see the banners
 Of twelve fair cities shine;
 But the banner of proud Clusium
 Was highest of them all,
 The terror of the Umbrian, 180
 The terror of the Gaul.

XXIII

And plainly and more plainly
 Now might the burghers know
 By port and vest, by horse and crest
 Each warlike Lucumo. 185

There Cilnius of Arretium

On his fleet roan was seen;
 And Astur of the fourfold shield,
 Girt with the brand none else may wield,
 Tolumnius with the belt of gold, 190
 And dark Verbenna from the hold
 By reedy Thrasymene.

XXIV

Fast by the royal standard,

O'erlooking all the war,
 Lars Porsena of Clusium 195
 Sat in his ivory car.
 By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name;
 And by the left false Sextus,
 That wrought the deed of shame. 200

XXV

But when the face of Sextus

Was seen among the foes,
 A yell that rent the firmament
 From all the town arose.
 On the house-tops was no woman 205
 But spat towards him and hissed,
 No child but screamed out curses,
 And shook its little fist.

XXVI

But the Consul's brow was sad,
 And the Consul's speech was low, 210
 And darkly looked he at the wall,
 And darkly at the foe.
 "Their van will be upon us
 Before the bridge goes down;
 And if they once may win the bridge, 215
 What hope to save the town?"

XXVII

Then out spake brave Horatius,
 The Captain of the Gate:
 "To every man upon this earth
 Death cometh soon or late. 220
 And how can man die better
 Than facing fearful odds,
 For the ashes of his fathers,
 And the temples of his Gods,

XXVIII

"And for the tender mother 225
 Who dandled him to rest,
 And for the wife who nurses
 His baby at her breast,
 And for the holy maidens
 Who feed the eternal flame, 230
 To save them from false Sextus
 That wrought the deed of shame?"

XXIX

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
 With all the speed ye may;
 I, with two more to help me, 235
 Will hold the foe in play.
 In yon strait path a thousand
 May well be stopped by three.
 Now who will stand on either hand,
 And keep the bridge with me?" 240

XXX

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
 A Ramnian proud was he:
 "Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
 And keep the bridge with thee." 245
 And out spake strong Herminius;
 Of Titian blood was he:
 "I will abide on thy left side,
 And keep the bridge with thee."

XXXI

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
 "As thou sayest, so let it be." 250
 And straight against that great array
 Forth went the dauntless Three.
 For Romans in Rome's quarrel
 Spared neither land nor gold,
 Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life, 255
 In the brave days of old.

XXXII

Then none was for a party;
 Then all were for the state;
 Then the great man helped the poor,
 And the poor man loved the great: 260
 Then lands were fairly portioned;
 Then spoils were fairly sold:
 The Romans were like brothers
 In the brave days of old.

XXXIII

Now Roman is to Roman 265
 More hateful than a foe,
 And the Tribunes beard the high,
 And the Fathers grind the low.
 As we wax hot in faction,
 In battle we wax cold: 270
 Wherefore men fight not as they fought
 In the brave days of old.

XXXIV

Now while the Three were tightening
 Their harness on their backs,
 The Consul was the foremost man 275
 To take in hand an axe:
 And Fathers mixed with Commons
 Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
 And smote upon the planks above,
 And loosed the props below. 280

XXXV

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold. 285
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head, 290
Where stood the dauntless Three.

XXXVI

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose: 295
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array:
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way; 300

XXXVII

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;

And Picus, long to Clusium 305
 Vassal in peace and war,
 Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
 From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
 The fortress of Nequinum lowers
 O'er the pale waves of Nar. 310

XXXVIII

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
 Into the stream beneath:
 Herminius struck at Seius,
 And clove him to the teeth:
 At Picus brave Horatius 315
 Darted one fiery thrust;
 And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
 Clashed in the bloody dust.

XXXIX

Then Ocnus of Falerii
 Rushed on the Roman Three; 320
 And Lausulus of Urgo,
 The rover of the sea;
 And Aruns of Volsinium,
 Who slew the great wild boar,
 The great wild boar that had his den 325
 Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
 And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
 Along Albinia's shore.

XL

Herminius smote down Aruns:
 Lartius laid Ocnus low: 330
 Right to the heart of Lausulus
 Horatius sent a blow.
 "Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
 No more, aghast and pale,
 From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark 335
 The track of thy destroying bark.
 No more Campania's hinds shall fly
 To woods and caverns when they spy
 Thy thrice accursed sail."

XLI

But now no sound of laughter 340
 Was heard among the foes,
 A wild and wrathful clamor
 From all the vanguard rose.
 Six spears' lengths from the entrance
 Halted that deep array, 345
 And for a space no man came forth
 To win the narrow way.

XLII

But hark! the cry is Astur:
 And lo! the ranks divide;
 And the great Lord of Luna 350
 Comes with his stately stride.
 Upon his ample shoulders

Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
 And in his hand he shakes the brand
 Which none but he can wield. 355

XLIII

He smiled on those bold Romans
 A smile serene and high;
 He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
 And scorn was in his eye,
 Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter 360
 Stand savagely at bay:
 But will ye dare to follow,
 If Astur clears the way?"

XLIV

Then, whirling up his broadsword
 With both hands to the height, 365
 He rushed against Horatius,
 And smote with all his might.
 With shield and blade Horatius
 Right deftly turned the blow.
 The blow, though turned, came yet too
 nigh; 370
 It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
 The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
 To see the red blood flow.

XLV

He reeled, and on Herminius
 He leaned one breathing-space; 375

Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
 Sprang right at Astur's face:
 Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
 So fierce a thrust he sped,
 The good sword stood a hand-breadth out 380
 Behind the Tuscan's head.

XLVI

And the great Lord of Luna
 Fell at that deadly stroke,
 As falls on Mount Alvernus
 A thunder-smitten oak. 385
 Far o'er the crashing forest
 The giant arms lie spread;
 And the pale augurs, muttering low,
 Gaze on the blasted head.

XLVII

On Astur's throat Horatius 390
 Right firmly pressed his heel,
 And thrice and four times tugged amain,
 Ere he wrenched out the steel.
 "And see," he cried, "the welcome
 Fair guests, that waits you here! 395
 What noble Lucumo comes next
 To taste our Roman cheer?"

XLVIII

But at his haughty challenge
 A sullen murmur ran,

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread, 400
 Along that glittering van.
 There lacked not men of prowess,
 Nor men of lordly race;
 For all Etruria's noblest
 Were round the fatal place. 405

XLIX

But all Etruria's noblest
 Felt their hearts sink to see
 On the earth the bloody corpses,
 In the path the dauntless Three:
 And, from the ghastly entrance 410
 Where those bold Romans stood,
 All shrank, like boys who unaware,
 Ranging the woods to start a hare,
 Come to the mouth of the dark lair
 Where, growling low, a fierce old bear 415
 Lies amidst bones and blood.

L

Was none who would be foremost
 To lead such dire attack:
 But those behind cried "Forward!"
 And those before cried "Back!" 420
 And backward now and forward
 Wavers the deep array;
 And on the tossing sea of steel,
 To and fro the standards reel;
 And the victorious trumpet-peal 425
 Dies fitfully away.

LI

Yet one man for one moment
 Stood out before the crowd;
Well-known was he to all the Three,
 And they gave him greeting loud, 430
“Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
 Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
 Here lies the road to Rome.”

LII

Thrice looked he at the city; 435
 Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
 And thrice turned back in dread:
And, white with fear and hatred,
 Scowled at the narrow way 440
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
 The bravest Tuscans lay.

LIII

But meanwhile axe and lever
 Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering 445
 Above the boiling tide.
“Come back, come back, Horatius!”
 Loud cried the Fathers all.
“Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
 Back, ere the ruin fall!” 450

LIV

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
 Herminius darted back:
 And, as they passed, beneath their feet
 They felt the timbers crack.
 But when they turned their faces, 455
 And on the farther shore
 Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
 They would have crossed once more.

LV

But with a crash like thunder
 Fell every loosened beam, 460
 And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
 Lay right athwart the stream:
 And a long shout of triumph
 Rose from the walls of Rome,
 As to the highest turret-tops 465
 Was splashed the yellow foam.

LVI

And, like a horse unbroken
 When first he feels the rein,
 The furious river struggled hard,
 And tossed his tawny mane, 470
 And burst the curb, and bounded,
 Rejoicing to be free,
 And whirling down, in fierce career,
 Battlement, and plank, and pier,
 Rushed headlong to the sea. 475

LVII

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
“Down with him!” cried false Sextus, 480
With a smile on his pale face.
“Now yield thee,” cried Lars Porsena,
“Now yield thee to our grace.”

LVIII

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see; 485
Nought spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus nought spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river 490
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

LIX

“Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman’s life, a Roman’s arms,
Take thou in charge this day!” 495
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

LX

No sound of joy or sorrow 500
 Was heard from either bank;
 But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
 With parted lips and straining eyes,
 Stood gazing where he sank;
 And when above the surges 505
 They saw his crest appear,
 All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
 And even the ranks of Tuscany
 Could scarce forbear to cheer.

LXI

But fiercely ran the current, 510
 Swollen high by months of rain:
 And fast his blood was flowing;
 And he was sore in pain,
 And heavy with his armor,
 And spent with changing blows; 515
 And oft they thought him sinking,
 But still again he rose.

LXII

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
 In such an evil case,
 Struggle through such a raging flood 520
 Safe to the landing-place:
 But his limbs were borne up bravely
 By the brave heart within,
 And our good father Tiber
 Bore bravely up his chin. 525

LXIII

“Curse on him!” quoth false Sextus;
 “Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
 We should have sacked the town!”
“Heaven help him!” quoth Lars Porsena, 530
 “and bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
 Was never seen before.”

LXIV

And now he feels the bottom;
 Now on dry earth he stands; 535
Now round him throng the Fathers
 To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
 And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate, 540
 Borne by the joyous crowd.

LXV

They gave him of the corn-land,
 That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
 Could plough from morn till night; 545
And they made a molten image,
 And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
 To witness if I lie.

LXVI

It stands in the Comitium, 550
 Plain for all folk to see;
 Horatius in his harness,
 Halting upon one knee:
 And underneath is written,
 In letters all of gold, 555
 How valiantly he kept the bridge
 In the brave days of old.

LXVII

And still his name sounds stirring
 Unto the men of Rome,
 As the trumpet-blast that cries to them 560
 To charge the Volscian home;
 And wives still pray to Juno
 For boys with hearts as bold
 As his who kept the bridge so well
 In the brave days of old. 565

LXVIII

And in the nights of winter,
 When the cold north winds blow,
 And the long howling of the wolves
 Is heard amidst the snow;
 When round the lonely cottage 570
 Roars loud the tempest's din,
 And the good logs of Algidus
 Roar louder yet within;

LXIX

When the oldest cask is opened,
 And the largest lamp is lit; 575
 When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
 And the kid turns on the spit;
 When young and old in circle
 Around the firebrands close;
 When the girls are weaving baskets, 580
 And the lads are shaping bows;

LXX

When the goodman mends his armor,
 And trims his helmet's plume;
 When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
 Goes flashing through the loom; 585
 With weeping and with laughter
 Still is the story told,
 How well Horatius kept the bridge
 In the brave days of old.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND
POLLUX, ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN
THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLI

I

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride, in all their pride,
Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows 5
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum,
To Mars without the wall.
Each Knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crowned; 10
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis 15
Shall have such honor still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
December's Nones are gay:
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day. 20

II

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
 We keep this solemn feast.
 Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
 Came spurring from the east. 25
 They came o'er wild Parthenius
 Tossing in waves of pine,
 O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
 O'er purple Apennine,
 From where with flutes and dances
 Their ancient mansion rings, 30
 In lordly Lacedaemon,
 The City of two kings,
 To where, by Lake Regillus,
 Under the Porcian height,
 All in the lands of Tusculum, 35
 Was fought the glorious fight.

III

Now on the place of slaughter
 Are cots and sheepfolds seen,
 And rows of vines, and fields of wheat,
 And apple-orchards green; 40
 The swine crush the big acorns
 That fall from Corne's oaks.
 Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
 The reaper's pottage smokes.
 The fisher baits his angle; 45
 The hunter twangs his bow;
 Little they think on those strong limbs
 That moulder deep below.

Little they think how sternly
 That day the trumpets pealed; 50
 How in the slippery swamp of blood
 Warrior and war-horse reeled;
 How wolves came with fierce gallop,
 And crows on eager wings,
 To tear the flesh of captains, 55
 And peck the eyes of kings;
 How thick the dead lay scattered
 Under the Porcian height;
 How through the gates of Tusculum
 Raved the wild stream of flight; 60
 And how the Lake Regillus
 Bubbled with crimson foam,
 What time the Thirty Cities
 Came forth to war with Rome.

IV

But, Roman, when thou standest 65
 Upon that holy ground,
 Look thou with heed on the dark rock
 That girds the dark lake round,
 So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
 Stamped deep into the flint: 70
 It was no hoof of mortal steed
 That made so strange a dint:
 There to the Great Twin Brethren
 Vow thou thy vows, and pray
 That they, in tempest and in fight, 75
 Will keep thy head away.

V

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
 Of mortal eyes were seen,
 Have years gone by an hundred
 And fourscore and thirteen. 80
 That summer a Virginius
 Was Consul first in place;
 The second was stout Aulus,
 Of the Posthumian race.
 The Herald of the Latines 85
 From Gabii came in state:
 The Herald of the Latines
 Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate:
 The Herald of the Latines
 Did in our Forum stand; 90
 And there he did his office,
 A sceptre in his hand.

VI

"Hear, Senators and people
 Of the good town of Rome,
 The Thirty Cities charge you 95
 To bring the Tarquins home:
 And if ye still be stubborn,
 To work the Tarquins wrong,
 The Thirty Cities warn you,
 Look that your walls be strong." 100

VII

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
 He spake a bitter jest:

"Once the jay sent a message
 Unto the eagle's nest:—
 Now yield thou up thine eyrie 105
 Unto the carrion-kite,
 Or come forth valiantly, and face
 The jays in deadly fight.—
 Forth looked in wrath the eagle;
 And carrion-kite and jay, 110
 Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
 Fled screaming far away."

VIII

The Herald of the Latines
 Hath hied him back in state;
 The Fathers of the City 115
 Are met in high debate.
 Then spake the elder Consul,
 An ancient man and wise:
 "Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
 To that which I advise. 120
 In seasons of great peril
 'Tis good that one bear sway;
 Then choose we a Dictator,
 Whom all men shall obey.
 Camerium knows how deeply 125
 The sword of Aulus bites,
 And all our city calls him
 The man of seventy fights.
 Then let him be Dictator
 For six months and no more, 130
 And have a Master of the Knights,
 And axes twenty-four."

IX

- So Aulus was Dictator,
 The man of seventy fights;
 He made Aebutius Elva 135
 His Master of the Knights.
 On the third morn thereafter,
 At dawning of the day,
 Did Aulus and Aebutius
 Set forth with their array. 140
 Sempronius Atratinus
 Was left in charge at home
 With boys, and with gray-headed men,
 To keep the walls of Rome.
 Hard by the Lake Regillus 145
 Our camp was pitched at night:
 Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
 Under the Porcian height.
 Far over hill and valley
 Their mighty host was spread; 150
 And with their thousand watch-fires
 The midnight sky was red.

X

- Up rose the golden morning
 Over the Porcian height,
 The proud Ides of Quintilis 155
 Marked evermore with white,
 Not without secret trouble
 Our bravest saw the foes,
 For girt by threescore thousand spears,
 The thirty standards rose. 160

From every warlike city
 That boasts the Latian name,
 Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
 That gallant army came; 165
 From Setia's purple vineyards,
 From Norba's ancient wall,
 From the white streets of Tusculum,
 The proudest town of all;
 From where the Witch's Fortress
 O'erhangs the dark-blue seas; 170
 From the still glassy lake that sleeps
 Beneath Aricia's trees—
 Those trees in whose dim shadow
 The ghastly priest doth reign,
 The priest who slew the slayer, 175
 And shall himself be slain;
 From the drear banks of Ufens,
 Where flights of marsh-fowl play,
 And buffaloes lie wallowing
 Through the hot summer's day; 180
 From the gigantic watch-towers,
 No work of earthly men,
 Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
 The never-ending fen;
 From the Laurentian jungle, 185
 The wild hog's reedy home ;
 From the green steeps whence Anio leaps
 In floods of snow-white foam.

XI

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
 Velitrae, with the might 190

Of Setia and of Tusculum,
 Were marshalled on the right:
 The leader was Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name;
 Upon his head a helmet 195
 Of red gold shone like flame;
 High on a gallant charger
 Of dark-gray hue he rode;
 Over his gilded armor
 A vest of purple flowed, 200
 Woven in the land of sunrise
 By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
 And by the sails of Carthage brought
 Far o'er the southern waters.

XII

Lavinium and Laurentum 205
 Had on the left their post,
 With all the banners of the marsh,
 And banners of the coast.
 Their leader was false Sextus,
 That wrought the deed of shame: 210
 With restless pace and haggard face
 To his last field he came.
 Men said he saw strange visions
 Which none beside might see,
 And that strange sounds were in his ears 215
 Which none might hear but he.
 A woman fair and stately,
 But pale as are the dead,
 Oft through the watches of the night
 Sat spinning by his bed. 220

And as she plied the distaff,
 In a sweet voice and low,
 She sang of great old houses,
 And fights fought long ago.
 So spun she, and so sang she, 225
 Until the east was gray,
 Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
 And shrieked, and fled away.

XIII

But in the centre thickest
 Were ranged the shields of foes, 230
 And from the centre loudest
 The cry of battle rose.
 There Tibur marched and Pedum
 Beneath proud Tarquin's rule,
 And Ferentinum of the rock, 235
 And Gabii of the pool.
 There rode the Volscian succors:
 There, in a dark stern ring,
 The Roman exiles gathered close
 Around the ancient king. 240
 Though white as Mount Soracte,
 When winter nights are long,
 His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt,
 His heart and hand were strong:
 Under his hoary eyebrows 245
 Still flashed forth quenchless rage,
 And, if the lance shook in his gripe,
 'Twas more with hate than age.
 Close at his side was Titus
 On an Apulian steed, 250

Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
 Too good for such a breed.

XIV

Now on each side the leaders
 Give signal for the charge;
 And on each side the footmen 255
 Strode on with lance and targe;
 And on each side the horsemen
 Struck their spurs deep in gore;
 And front to front the armies
 Met with a mighty roar: 260
 And under that great battle
 The earth with blood was red;
 And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
 The dust hung overhead;
 And louder still and louder 265
 Rose from the darkened field
 The braying of the war-horns,
 The clang of sword and shield,
 The rush of squadrons sweeping
 Like whirlwinds o'er the plain, 270
 The shouting of the slayers,
 And screeching of the slain.

XV

False Sextus rode out foremost:
 His look was high and bold;
 His corselet was of bison's hide, 275
 Plated with steel and gold.
 As glares the famished eagle
 From the Digentian rock

On a choice lamb that bounds alone
 Before Bandusia's flock, 280
 Herminius glared on Sextus,
 And came with eagle speed,
 Herminius on black Auster,
 Brave champion on brave steed;
 In his right hand the broadsword 285
 That kept the bridge so well,
 And on his helm the crown he won
 When proud Fidenae fell.
 Woe to the maid whose lover
 Shall cross his path to-day! 290
 False Sextus saw, and trembled,
 And turned, and fled away.
 As turns, as flies, the woodman
 In the Calabrian brake,
 When through the reeds gleams the round eye 295
 Of that fell speckled snake;
 So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
 And hid him in the rear,
 Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
 Bristling with crest and spear. 300

XVI

But far to north Aebutius,
 The Master of the Knights,
 Gave Tubero of Norba
 To feed the Porcian kites.
 Next under those red horse-hoofs 305
 Flaccus of Setia lay;
 Better had he been pruning
 Among his elms that day.

Mamilius saw the slaughter,
 And tossed his golden crest, 310
 And towards the Master of the Knights
 Through the thick battle pressed.
 Aebutius smote Mamilius
 So fiercely on the shield
 That the great lord of Tusculum 315
 Well nigh rolled on the field.
 Mamilius smote Aebutius,
 With a good aim and true,
 Just where the neck and shoulder join,
 And pierced him through and through; 320
 And brave Aebutius Elva
 Fell swooning to the ground:
 But a thick wall of bucklers
 Encompassed him around.
 His clients from the battle 325
 Bare him some little space,
 And filled a helm from the dark lake,
 And bathed his brow and face;
 And when at last he opened
 His swimming eyes to light, 330
 Men say, the earliest word he spake
 Was, "Friends, how goes the fight?"

XVII

But meanwhile in the centre
 Great deeds of arms were wrought;
 There Aulus the Dictator 335
 And there Valerius fought.
 Aulus with his good broadsword
 A bloody passage cleared

To where, amidst the thickest foes,
He saw the long white beard. 340
Flat lighted that good broadsword
Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance: he dropped the reins:
He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him, 345
With eyes like coals of fire;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
Fast down to earth they spring, 350
And hand to hand they fight on foot
Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Caeso
A death wound in the face;
Tall Caeso was the bravest man 355
Of the brave Fabian race:
Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
The priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius,
Of Rome's great Julian line; 360
Julius, who left his mansion
High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and woe
Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin 365
A corpse was Julius laid;
And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
And lopped off half his crest; 370

But Titus stabbed Valerius
 A span deep in the breast.
 Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
 Valerius reeled and fell.
 Ah! woe is me for the good house 375
 That loves the people well!
 Then shouted loud the Latines;
 And with one rush they bore
 The struggling Romans backward
 Three lances' length and more: 380
 And up they took proud Tarquin,
 And laid him on a shield,
 And four strong yeomen bare him,
 Still senseless, from the field.

XVIII

But fiercer grew the fighting 385
 Around Valerius dead;
 For Titus dragged him by the foot,
 And Aulus by the head.
 "On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus,
 "See how the rebels fly!" 390
 "Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus,
 "And win this fight or die!
 They must not give Valerius
 To raven and to kite;
 For aye Valerius loathed the wrong, 395
 And aye upheld the right:
 And for your wives and babies
 In the front rank he fell.
 Now play the men for the good house
 That loves the people well!" 400

XIX

Then tenfold round the body
 The roar of battle rose,
 Like the roar of a burning forest,
 When a strong north wind blows.
 Now backward, and now forward, 405
 Rocked furiously the fray,
 Till none could see Valerius,
 And none wist where he lay.
 For shivered arms and ensigns
 Were heaped there in a mound, 410
 And corpses stiff, and dying men
 That writhed and gnawed the ground;
 And wounded horses kicking,
 And snorting purple foam:
 Right well did such a couch befit 415
 A Consular of Rome.

XX

But north looked the Dictator;
 North looked he long and hard;
 And spake to Caius Cossus,
 The Captain of his Guard: 420
 "Caius, of all the Romans
 Thou hast the keenest sight;
 Say, what through yonder storm of dust
 Comes from the Latian right?"

XXI

Then answered Caius Cossus 425
 "I see an evil sight;

The banner of proud Tusculum
 Comes from the Latian right:
 I see the plumed horsemen;
 And far before the rest 430
 I see the dark-gray charger,
 I see the purple vest;
 I see the golden helmet
 That shines far off like flame;
 So ever rides Mamilius, 435
 Prince of the Latian name."

XXII

"Now hearken, Caius Cossus:
 Spring on thy horse's back;
 Ride as the wolves of Apennine
 Were all upon thy track; 440
 Hasten to our southward battle:
 And never draw thy rein
 Until thou find Herminius,
 And bid him come again."

XXIII

So Aulus spake, and turned him 445
 Again to that fierce strife;
 And Caius Cossus mounted,
 And rode for death and life.
 Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
 The helmets of the dead, 450
 And many a curdling pool of blood
 Splashed him from heel to head.
 So came he far to southward,
 Where fought the Roman host,

Against the banners of the marsh 455
 And banners of the coast.
 Like corn before the sickle
 The stout Lavinians fell,
 Beneath the edge of the true sword
 That kept the bridge so well. 460

XXIV

“Herminius! Aulus greets thee;
 He bids thee come with speed,
 To help our central battle;
 For sore is there our need.
 There wars the youngest Tarquin, 465
 And there the Crest of Flame,
 The Tusculan Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name.
 Valerius hath fallen fighting
 In front of our array: 470
 And Aulus of the seventy fields
 Alone upholds the day.”

XXV

Herminius beat his bosom:
 But never a word he spake.
 He clapped his hand on Auster's mane: 475
 He gave the reins a shake,
 Away, away went Auster,
 Like an arrow from the bow:
 Black Auster was the fleetest steed
 From Aufidus to Po. 480

XXVI

Right glad were all the Romans
Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
Around Valerius dead,
When from the South the cheering 485
Rose with a mighty swell;
“Herminius comes, Herminius,
Who kept the bridge so well!”

XXVII

Mamilius spied Herminius,
And dashed across the way. 490
“Herminius! I have sought thee
Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
Shall never more go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum, 495
And lay thou on for Rome!”

XXVIII

All round them paused the battle,
While met in mortal fray
The Roman and the Tusculan,
The horses black and gray. 500
Herminius smote Mamilius
Through breast-plate and through breast;
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.
Mamilius smote Herminius 505
Through head-piece and through head;

And side by side those chiefs of pride
 Together fell down dead.
 Down fell they dead together
 In a great lake of gore; 510
 And still stood all who saw them fall
 While men might count a score.

XXIX

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning,
 The dark-gray charger fled:
 He burst through ranks of fighting men; 515
 He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
 His bridle far out-streaming,
 His flanks all blood and foam,
 He sought the southern mountains,
 The mountains of his home. 520
 The pass was steep and rugged,
 The wolves they howled and whined;
 But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
 And he left the wolves behind.
 Through many a startled hamlet, 525
 Thundered his flying feet;
 He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
 He rushed up the long white street;
 He rushed by tower and temple,
 And paused not from his race 530
 Till he stood before his master's door
 In the stately market-place.
 And straightway round him gathered
 A pale and trembling crowd,
 And when they knew him, cries of rage 535
 Brake forth, and wailing loud:

And women rent their tresses
For their great prince's fall;
And old men girt on their old swords,
And went to man the wall. 540

XXX

But, like a graven image,
Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
Into his master's face.
The raven-mane that daily 545
With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed
And twined in even tresses,
And decked with colored ribands
From her own gay attire, 550
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
In carnage and in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
And seized black Auster's rein.
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath, 555
And ran at him amain.
"The furies of thy brother
With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house
Upon black Auster ride!" 560
As on an Alpine watch-tower
From heaven comes down the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
The blade of Aulus came:
And out the red blood spouted, 565
In a wide arch and tall.

As spouts a fountain in the court
 Of some rich Capuan's hall,
 The knees of all the Latines
 Were loosened with dismay 570
 When dead, on dead Herminius,
 The bravest Tarquin lay.

XXXI

And Aulus the Dictator
 Stroked Auster's raven mane,
 With heed he looked unto the girths, 575
 With heed unto the rein.
 "Now bear me well, black Auster,
 Into yon thick array;
 And thou and I will have revenge
 For thy good lord this day." 580

XXXII

So spake he; and was buckling
 Tighter black Auster's band,
 When he was aware of a princely pair
 That rode at his right hand.
 So like they were, no mortal 585
 Might one from other know:
 White as snow their armor was;
 Their steeds were white as snow.
 Never on earthly anvil
 Did such rare armor gleam; 590
 And never did such gallant steeds
 Drink of an earthly stream.

XXXIII

And all who saw them trembled,
 And pale grew every cheek;
 And Aulus the Dictator 595
 Scarce gathered voice to speak.
 "Say by what name men call you?
 What city is your home?
 And wherefore ride ye in such guise
 Before the ranks of Rome?" 600

XXXIV

"By many names men call us;
 In many lands we dwell:
 Well Samothracia knows us;
 Cyrene knows us well.
 Our house in gay Tarentum 605
 Is hung each morn with flowers:
 High o'er the masts of Syracuse
 Our marble portal towers;
 But by the proud Eurotas
 Is our dear native home; 610
 And for the right we come to fight
 Before the ranks of Rome."

XXXV

So answered those strange horsemen,
 And each couched low his spear;
 And forthwith all the ranks of Rome 615
 Were bold, and of good cheer:
 And on the thirty armies
 Came wonder and affright,

And Ardea wavered on the left,
 And Cora on the right. 620
 "Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus;
 "The foe begins to yield!
 Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
 Charge for the Golden Shield!
 Let no man stop to plunder, 625
 But slay, and slay, and slay;
 The Gods who live for ever
 Are on our side to-day."

XXXVI

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish
 From earth to heaven arose. 630
 The kites knew well the long stern swell
 That bids the Romans close.
 Then the good sword of Aulus
 Was lifted up to slay:
 Then, like a crag down Apennine, 635
 Rushed Auster through the fray.
 But under those strange horsemen
 Still thicker lay the slain;
 And after those strange horses
 Black Auster toiled in vain. 640
 Behind them Rome's long battlé
 Came rolling on the foe,
 Ensigns dancing wild above,
 Blades all in line below.
 So comes the Po in flood-time 645
 Upon the Celtic plain:
 So comes the squall, blacker than night,
 Upon the Adrian main.

Now, by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight 650
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tide of flight.
So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow,
So corn-sheaves in the flood-time 655
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head;
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Lanuvium fled. 660
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray;
The footmen of Velitrae
Threw shield and spear away.
And underfoot was trampled, 665
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before:
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks 670
From where the apple blossoms wave
On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
Chief of the Volscian aids,
And Metius with the long fair curls, 675
The love of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
The hunter of the deer; 680

And in the back false Sextus
 Felt the good Roman steel,
 And wriggling in the dust he dies,
 Like a worm beneath the wheel:
 And fliers and pursuers 685
 Were mingled in a mass;
 And far away the battle
 Went roaring through the pass.

XXXVII

Sempronius Atratinus
 Sate in the Eastern Gate, 690
 Beside him were three Fathers,
 Each in his chair of state;
 Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons
 That day were in the field,
 And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve, 695
 Who kept the Golden Shield;
 And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
 For wisdom far renowned;
 In all Etruria's colleges
 Was no such Pontiff found. 700
 And all around the portal,
 And high above the wall,
 Stood a great throng of people,
 But sad and silent all;
 Young lads, and stooping elders 705
 That might not bear the mail,
 Matrons with lips that quivered,
 And maids with faces pale.
 Since the first gleam of daylight,
 Sempronius had not ceased 710

To listen for the rushing
 Of horse-hoofs from the east.
 The mist of eve was rising,
 The sun was hastening down,
 When he was aware of a princely pair 715
 Fast pricking towards the town.
 So like they were, man never
 Saw twins so like before;
 Red with gore their armor was,
 Their steeds were red with gore. 720

XXXVIII

“Hail to the great Asylum!
 Hail to the hill-tops seven!
 Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
 And the shield that fell from heaven!
 This day, by Lake Regillus, 725
 Under the Porcian height,
 All in the lands of Tusculum
 Was fought a glorious fight,
 To-morrow your Dictator
 Shall bring in triumph home 730
 The spoils of thirty cities
 To deck the shrines of Rome!”

XXXIX

Then burst from that great concourse
 A shout that shook the towers
 And some ran north, and some ran south 735
 Crying, “The day is ours!”
 But on rode these strange horsemen,
 With slow and lordly pace;

And none who saw their bearing
 Durst ask their name or race. 740
 On rode they to the Forum,
 While laurel-boughs and flowers,
 From house-tops and from windows,
 Fell on their crests in showers.
 When they drew nigh to Vesta, 745
 They vaulted down amain,
 And washed their horses in the well
 That springs by Vesta's fane.
 And straight again they mounted
 And rode to Vesta's door; 750
 Then, like a blast, away they passed,
 And no man saw them more.

XL

And all the people trembled,
 And pale grew every cheek;
 And Sergius the High Pontiff 755
 Alone found voice to speak:
 "The gods who live for ever
 Have fought for Rome to-day!
 These be the Great Twin Brethren
 To whom the Dorians pray. 760
 Back comes the Chief in triumph,
 Who, in the hour of fight,
 Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
 In harness on his right.
 Safe comes the ship to haven, 765
 Through billows and through gales,
 If once the Great Twin Brethren
 Sit shining on the sails.

Wherefore they washed their horses
 In Vesta's holy well, 770
 Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door,
 I know, but may not tell.
 Here, hard by Vesta's Temple,
 Build we a stately dome
 Unto the Great Twin Brethren 775
 Who fought so well for Rome.
 And when the months returning
 Bring back this day of fight,
 The proud Ides of Quintilis,
 Marked evermore with white, 780
 Unto the Great Twin Brethren
 Let all the people throng,
 With chaplets and with offerings,
 With music and with song;
 And let the doors and windows 785
 Be hung with garlands all,
 And let the Knights be summoned
 To Mars without the wall:
 Thence let them ride in purple
 With joyous trumpet-sound, 790
 Each mounted on his war-horse,
 And each with olive crowned;
 And pass in solemn order
 Before the sacred dome,
 Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren 795
 Who fought so well for Rome!"

VIRGINIA

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE FORUM ON THE DAY
WHEREON LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERANUS
AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS STOLO WERE ELECTED
TRIBUNES OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME, IN THE
YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLXXXII

YE good men of the Commons, with loving hearts and
true,

Who stand by the bold Tribunes that still have stood by
you,

Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with
care,

A tale of what Rome once hath borne, of what Rome yet
may bear.

This is no Grecian fable, of fountains running wine, 5

Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors turned to swine.

Here, in this very Forum, under the noonday sun,

In sight of all the people, the bloody deed was done.

Old men still creep among us who saw that fearful day,

Just seventy years and seven ago, when the wicked Ten
bare sway. 10

Of all the wicked Ten still the names are held accursed,
And of all the wicked Ten Appius Claudius was the worst.
He stalked along the Forum like King Tarquin in his
pride:

Twelve axes waited on him, six marching on a side;
The townsmen shrank to right and left, and eyed askance
with fear 15
His lowering brow, his curling mouth, which always
seemed to sneer:
That brow of hate, that mouth of scorn, marks all the
kindred still;
For never was there Claudius yet but wished the Com-
mons ill:
Nor lacks he fit attendance; for close behind his heels,
With outstretched chin and crouching pace, the client
Marcus steals, 20
His loins girt up to run with speed, be the errand what it
may,
And the smile flickering on his cheek, for aught his lord
may say.
Such varlets pimp and jest for hire among the lying
Greeks:
Such varlets still are paid to hoot when brave Licinius
speaks.
Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd; 25
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;
Where'er down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye
see;
And wheresoe'er such lord is found, such client still will be.

Just then, as through one cloudless chink in a black
stormy sky,
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a fair young girl came
by. 30
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her
arm,

Home she went bounding from the school, nor dreamed
of shame or harm;

And past those dreaded axes she innocently ran,
With bright, frank brow that had not learned to blush at
gaze of man;

And up the Sacred Street she turned, and, as she danced
along,

35

She warbled gaily to herself lines of the good old song,
How for a sport the princes came spurring from the
camp,

And found Lucrece, combing the fleece, under the mid-
night lamp.

The maiden sang as sings the lark, when up he darts his
flight,

From his nest in the green April corn, to meet the morn-
ing light;

40

And Appius heard her sweet young voice, and saw her
sweet young face,

And loved her with the accursed love of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum, and up the Sacred Street,
His vulture eye pursued the trip of those small glancing
feet.

.

Over the Alban mountains the light of morning broke;
From all the roofs of the Seven Hills curled the thin
wreaths of smoke:

45

The city-gates were opened; the Forum all alive,
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive:
Blithely on brass and timber the craftsman's stroke was
ringing,

And blithely o'er her panniers the market-girl was singing,

50

And blithely young Virginia came smiling from her home:
Ah! woe for young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome!
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her
arm,

Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of
shame or harm.

She crossed the Forum shining with stalls in alleys gay, 55
And just had reached the very spot whereon I stand this
day,

When up the varlet Marcus came; not such as when ere-
while

He crouched behind his patron's heels with the true
client smile:

He came with lowering forehead, swollen features, and
clenched fist,

And strode across Virginia's path, and caught her by the
wrist. 60

Hard strove the frightened maiden, and screamed with look
aghast;

And at her scream from right and left the folk came run-
ning fast;

The money-changer Crispus, with his thin silver hairs,
And Hanno from the stately booth glittering with Punic
wares,

And the strong smith Muraena, grasping a half-forged
brand, 65

And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in his hand.

All came in wrath and wonder; for all knew that fair
child;

And, as she passed them twice a day, all kissed their
hands and smiled;

And the strong smith Muraena gave Marcus such a blow,

The caitiff reeled three paces back, and let the maiden
go.

70

Yet glared he fiercely round him, and growled in harsh,
fell tone,

“She’s mine, and I will have her: I seek but for mine
own:

She is my slave, born in my house, and stolen away and
sold,

The year of the sore sickness, ere she was twelve hours old.
’Twas in the sad September, the month of wail and
fright,

75

Two augurs were borne forth that morn; the Consul died
ere night.

I wait on Appius Claudius, I waited on his sire:

Let him who works the client wrong beware the patron’s
ire!”

So spake the varlet Marcus; and dread and silence
came

On all the people at the sound of the great Claudian
name.

80

For then there was no Tribune to speak the word of
might,

Which makes the rich man tremble, and guards the poor
man’s right.

There was no brave Licinius, no honest Sextius then;
But all the city, in great fear, obeyed the wicked Ten.

Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muraena’s skirt, and sobbed, and
shrieked for aid,

85

Forth through the throng of gazers the young Icilius
pressed,

And stamped his foot, and rent his gown, and smote upon
his breast,

And sprang upon that column, by many a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets, three rusting swords,
are hung.

90

And beckoned to the people, and in bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning words which tyrants
quake to hear.

“Now, by your children’s cradles, now by your fathers’
graves,

Be men to-day, Quirites, or be for ever slaves!
For this did Servius give us laws? For this did Lucrece
bleed?

95

For this was the great vengeance wrought on Tarquin’s
evil seed?

For this did those false sons make red the axes of their
sire?

For this did Scaevola’s right hand hiss in the Tuscan
fire?

Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race that stormed the
lion’s den?

Shall we, who could not brook one lord, crouch to the
wicked Ten?

100

Oh for that ancient spirit which curbed the Senate’s will!
Oh for the tents which in old time whitened the Sacred
Hill!

In those brave days our fathers stood firmly side by side;
They faced the Marcian fury; they tamed the Fabian
pride:

They drove the fiercest Quinctius an outcast forth from
Rome;

105

They sent the haughtiest Claudius with shivered fasces
home.

But what their care bequeathed us our madness flung
away:

All the ripe fruit of threescore years was blighted in a day.
Exult, ye proud Patricians! The hard-fought fight is o'er.
We strove for honors—'twas in vain: for freedom—'tis
no more. 110

No crier to the polling summons the eager throng;
No Tribune breathes the word of might that guards the
weak from wrong.

Our very hearts, that were so high, sink down beneath
your will.

Riches, and lands, and power, and state—ye have them:
—keep them still.

Still keep the holy fillets; still keep the purple gown, 115
The axes, and the curule chair, the car, and laurel crown:
Still press us for your cohorts, and, when the fight is done,
Still fill your garners from the soil which our good swords
have won.

Still, like a spreading ulcer, which leech-craft may not
cure,

Let your foul usance eat away the substance of the poor. 120
Still let your haggard debtors bear all their fathers bore;
Still let your dens of torment be noisome as of yore;
No fire when Tiber freezes; no air in dog-star heat;
And store of rods for free-born backs, and holes for free-
born feet.

Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate; 125
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.
But, by the Shades beneath us, and by the Gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love!

Have ye not graceful ladies, whose spotless lineage
springs

From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and ancient Alban
kings? 130

Ladies, who deign not on our paths to set their tender
feet,

Who from their cars look down with scorn upon the won-
dering street,

Who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold,
And breathe of Capuan odors, and shine with Spanish
gold?

Then leave the poor Plebeian his single tie to life— 135

The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister, and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vexed soul
endures,

The kiss, in which he half forgets even such a yoke as
yours.

Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with
pride;

Still let the bridegroom's arms infold an unpolluted bride. 140

Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's
blood to flame,

Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the
wretched dare."

• • • • •
Straightway Virginius led the maid a little space aside, 145

To where the reeking shambles stood, piled up with horn
and hide,

Close to yon low dark archway, where, in a crimson
flood,

Leaps down to the great sewer the gurgling stream of
blood.

Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid his whittle down;
Virginius caught the whittle up, and hid it in his gown. 150
And then his eyes grew very dim, and his throat began
to swell,

And in a hoarse, changed voice he spake, "Farewell,
sweet child! Farewell!

Oh! how I loved my darling! Though stern I some-
times be,

To thee, thou know'st I was not so. Who could be so to
thee?

And how my darling loved me! How glad she was to
hear 155

My footstep on the threshold when I came back last year!
And how she danced with pleasure to see my civic crown,
And took my sword, and hung it up, and brought me
forth my gown!

Now, all those things are over—yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays; 160
And none will grieve when I go forth, or smile when I
return,

Or watch beside the old man's bed, or weep upon his urn.
The house that was the happiest within the Roman
walls,

The house that envied not the wealth of Capua's marble
halls,

Now, for the brightness of thy smile, must have eternal
gloom, 165

And for the music of thy voice, the silence of the tomb.
The time is come. See how he points his eager hand this
way!

See how his eyes gloat on thy grief, like a kite's upon the
prey!

With all his wit, he little deems, that, spurned, betrayed,
bereft,

Thy father hath in his despair one fearful refuge left. 170

He little deems that in this hand I clutch what still can
save

Thy gentle youth from taunts and blows, the portion of
the slave;

Yea, and from that nameless evil, that passeth taunt and
blow—

Foul outrage which thou knowest not, which thou shalt
never know.

Then clasp me round the neck once more and give me one
more kiss; 175

And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but
this."

With that he lifted high the steel, and smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth, and with one sob she
died.

Then, for a little moment, all people held their breath;
And through the crowded Forum was stillness as of
death; 180

And in another moment brake forth from one and all

A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall.

Some with averted faces shrieking fled home amain;

Some ran to call a leech; and some ran to lift the slain:

Some felt her lips and little wrist, if life might there be
found; 185

And some tore up their garments fast, and strove to
stanch the wound.

In vain they ran, and felt, and stanced; for never truer
 blow
 That good right arm had dealt in fight against a Volscian
 foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that deed, he shuddered
 and sank down,
 And hid his face some little space with the corner of his
 gown, 190
 Till, with white lips and bloodshot eyes, Virginius tottered
 nigh,
 And stood before the judgment-seat, and held the knife
 on high.
 "Oh! dwellers in the nether gloom, avengers of the slain,
 By this dear blood I cry to you, do right between us twain;
 And even as Appius Claudius hath dealt by me and mine, 195
 Deal you by Appius Claudius and all the Claudian line!"
 So spake the slayer of his child, and turned, and went
 his way;
 But first he cast one haggard glance to where the body
 lay,
 And writhed, and groaned a fearful groan, and then, with
 steadfast feet,
 Strode right across the market-place unto the Sacred
 Street. 200

Then up sprang Appius Claudius: "Stop him; alive
 or dead!
 Ten thousand pounds of copper to the man who brings
 his head."
 He looked upon his clients; but none would work his
 will.

He looked upon his lictors; but they trembled, and stood still.

And, as Virginius through the press his way in silence cleft,

205

Ever the mighty multitude fell back to right and left.

And he hath passed in safety unto his woful home,

And there ta'en horse to tell the camp what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen from every side,

And streets and porches round were filled with that o'er-flowing tide;

210

And close around the body gathered a little train

Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain.

They brought a bier, and hung it with many a cypress crown,

And gently they uplifted her, and gently laid her down.

The face of Appius Claudius wore the Claudian scowl and sneer,

215

And in the Claudian note he cried, "What doth this rabble here?

Have they no crafts to mind at home, that hitherward they stray?

Ho! lictors, clear the market-place, and fetch the corpse away!"

The voice of grief and fury till then had not been loud;

But a deep sullen murmur wandered among the crowd,

220

Like the moaning noise that goes before the whirlwind on the deep,

Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but half-aroused from sleep.

But when the lictors at that word, tall yeomen all and
strong,

Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs, went down into the
throng,

Those old men say, who saw that day of sorrow and of
sin,

225

That in the Roman Forum was never such a din.

The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls of grief and
hate,

Were heard beyond the Pincian Hill, beyond the Latin
Gate.

But close around the body, where stood the little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain, 230
No cries were there, but teeth set fast, low whispers and
black frowns,

And breaking up of benches, and girding up of gowns.
'Twas well the lictors might not pierce to where the
maiden lay,

Else surely had they been all twelve torn limb from limb
that day.

Right glad they were to struggle back, blood streaming
from their heads,

235

With axes all in splinters, and raiment all in shreds.

Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip, and the blood left
his cheek;

And thrice he beckoned with his hand, and thrice he
strove to speak;

And thrice the tossing Forum set up a frightful yell;

"See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done; and hide thy
shame in hell!

240

Thou that wouldst make our maidens slaves must first
make slaves of men.

Tribunes! Hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked
Ten!"

And straightway, thick as hailstones, came whizzing
through the air

Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all round the curule
chair:

And upon Appius Claudius great fear and trembling
came;

245

For never was a Claudius yet brave against aught but
shame.

Though the great houses love us not, we own, to do them
right,

That the great houses, all save one, have borne them well
in fight.

Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs and his wrongs,
His vengeance and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.

250

Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan
bowed;

And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is
proud.

But evermore a Claudius shrinks from a stricken field,
And changes color like a maid at sight of sword and
shield.

The Claudian triumphs all were won within the city
towers;

255

The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but
ours.

A Cossus, like a wild-cat, springs ever at the face;
A Fabius rushes like a boar against the shouting chase;
But the vile Claudian litter, raging with currish spite,
Still yelps and snaps at those who run, still runs from
those who smite.

260

So now 'twas seen of Appius. When stones began to
fly,

He shook, and crouched, and wrung his hands, and smote
upon his thigh.

“Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by me in this fray!
Must I be torn in pieces? Home, home, the nearest
way!”

While yet he spake, and looked around with a bewildered
stare,

265

Four sturdy lictors put their necks beneath the curule
chair;

And fourscore clients on the left, and fourscore on the
right,

Arrayed themselves with swords and staves, and loins girt
up for fight.

But, though without or staff or sword, so furious was the
throng,

That scarce the train with might and main could bring
their lord along.

270

Twelve times the crowd made at him; five times they
seized his gown;

Small chance was his to rise again, if once they got him
down:

And sharper came the pelting; and evermore the yell—
“Tribunes! we will have Tribunes!”—rose with a louder
swell:

And the chair tossed as tosses a bark with tattered sail

275

When raves the Adriatic beneath an eastern gale,
When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost in clouds of
spume,

And the great Thunder-Cape has donned his veil of inky
gloom.

One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and one beneath the
ear;

And ere he reached Mount Palatine, he swooned with
pain and fear. 280

His cursed head, that he was wont to hold so high with
pride,

Now, like a drunken man's hung down, and swayed
from side to side;

And when his stout retainers had brought him to his door,
His face and neck were all one cake of filth and clotted
gore.

As Appius Claudius was that day, so may his grandson be! 285
God send Rome one such other sight, and send me there
to see!

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THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE CAPITOL, ON THE
DAY WHEREON MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A SECOND
TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED OVER KING PYRRHUS
AND THE TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY
CCCCLXXIX

I

Now slain is King Amulius,
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers, 5
Who spake the words of doom:
“The children to the Tiber;
The mother to the tomb.”

II

In Alba's lake no fisher
His net to-day is flinging: 10
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
To-day no axe is ringing:
The yoke hangs o'er the manger:
The scythe lies in the hay:
Through all the Alban villages 15
No work is done to-day.

III

And every Alban burgher
Hath donned his whitest gown;
And every head in Alba
Weareth a poplar crown; 20
And every Alban door-post
With boughs and flowers is gay:
For to-day the dead are living;
The lost are found to-day.

IV

They were doomed by a bloody king: 25
They were doomed by a lying priest:
They were cast on the raging flood:
They were tracked by the raging beast:
Raging beast and raging flood
Alike have spared the prey; 30
And to-day the dead are living:
The lost are found to-day.

V

The troubled river knew them,
And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle 35
That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore. 40
Twenty winters, twenty springs,

Since then have rolled away;
 And to-day the dead are living:
 The lost are found to-day.

VI

Blithe it was to see the twins, 45
 Right goodly youths and tall,
 Marching from Alba Longa
 To their old grandsire's hall.
 Along their path fresh garlands
 Are hung from tree to tree; 50
 Before them stride the pipers,
 Piping a note of glee.

VII

On the right goes Romulus,
 With arms to the elbows red,
 And in his hand a broadsword, 55
 And on the blade a head—
 A head in an iron helmet,
 With horse-hair hanging down,
 A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
 Fixed in a ghastly frown— 60
 The head of King Amulius
 Of the great Sylvian line,
 Who reigned in Alba Longa,
 On the throne of Aventine.

VIII

On the left side goes Remus, 65
 With wrists and fingers red,

And in his hand a boar-spear,
 And on the point a head—
 A wrinkled head and agèd,
 With silver beard and hair, 70
 And holy fillets round it,
 Such as the pontiffs wear.
 The head of ancient Camers,
 Who spake the words of doom:
 “The children to the Tiber; 75
 The mother to the tomb.”

IX

Two and two behind the twins
 Their trusty comrades go,
 Four and forty valiant men,
 With club, and axe, and bow. 80
 On each side every hamlet
 Pours forth its joyous crowd,
 Shouting lads and baying dogs
 And children laughing loud,
 And old men weeping fondly 85
 As Rhea's boys go by,
 And maids who shriek to see the heads,
 Yet, shrieking, press more nigh.

X

So they marched along the lake;
 They marched by fold and stall, 90
 By corn-field and by vineyard,
 Unto the old man's hall.

XI

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
 Capys, the sightless seer;
 From head to foot he trembled 95
 As Romulus drew near.
 And up stood stiff his thin white hair,
 And his blind eyes flashed fire:
 "Hail! foster-child of the wondrous nurse!
 Hail! son of the wondrous sire! 100

XII

"But thou—what dost thou here
 In the old man's peaceful hall?
 What doth the eagle in the coop,
 The bison in the stall?
 Our corn fills many a garner; 105
 Our vines clasp many a tree;
 Our flocks are white on many a hill,
 But these are not for thee.

XIII

"For thee no treasure ripens
 In the Tartessian mine: 110
 For thee no ship brings precious bales
 Across the Libyan brine:
 Thou shalt not drink from amber;
 Thou shalt not rest on down;
 Arabia shall not steep thy locks, 115
 Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

XIV

“Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man’s seed are born,
Whom woman’s milk have fed. 120
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest;
Thou that art sprung from the War-god’s
loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf’s breast.

XV

“From sunrise unto sunset 125
All earth shall hear thy fame:
A glorious city thou shalt build,
And name it by thy name:
And there, unquenched through ages,
Like Vesta’s sacred fire, 130
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
The spirit of thy sire.

XVI

“The ox toils through the furrow,
Obedient to the goad;
The patient ass, up flinty paths, 135
Plods with his weary load:
With whine and bound the spaniel
His master’s whistle hears;
And the sheep yields her patiently
To the loud clashing shears. 140

XVII

"But thy nurse will hear no master;
 Thy nurse will bear no load;
 And woe to them that shear her,
 And woe to them that goad!
 When all the pack, loud baying, 145
 Her bloody lair surrounds,
 She dies in silence, biting hard,
 Amidst the dying hounds.

XVIII

"Pomona loves the orchard;
 And Liber loves the vine; 150
 And Pales loves the straw-built shed
 Warm with the breath of kine;
 And Venus loves the whispers
 Of plighted youth and maid,
 In April's ivory moonlight 155
 Beneath the chestnut shade.

XIX

"But thy father loves the clashing
 Of broadsword and of shield:
 He loves to drink the steam that reeks
 From the fresh battle-field: 160
 He smiles a smile more dreadful
 Than his own dreadful frown,
 When he sees the thick black cloud of smoke
 Go up from the conquered town.

XX

“And such as is the War-god, 165
The author of thy line,
And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
His baths and his perfumes; 170
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
Their dyeing-vats and looms:
Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar:
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs 175
And scrolls of wordy lore.

XXI

“Thine, Roman, is the pilum:
Roman, the sword is thine,
That even trench, the bristling mound,
The legion’s ordered line; 180
And thine the wheels of triumph,
Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
To Jove’s eternal fane.

XXII

“Beneath thy yoke the Volscian 185
Shall veil his lofty brow:
Soft Capua’s curled revellers
Before thy chairs shall bow:
The Lucumoes of Arnus
Shall quake thy rods to see; 190

And the proud Samnite's heart of steel
 Shall yield to only thee.

XXIII

"The Gaul shall come against thee
 From the land of snow and night:
 Thou shalt give his fair-haired armies 195
 To the raven and the kite.

XXIV

"The Greek shall come against thee
 The conqueror of the East.
 Beside him stalks to battle
 The huge earth-shaking beast, 200
 The beast on whom the castle
 With all its guards doth stand,
 The beast who hath between his eyes
 The serpent for a hand.
 First march the bold Epirotes, 205
 Wedged close with shield and spear;
 And the ranks of false Tarentum
 Are glittering in the rear.

XXV

"The ranks of false Tarentum
 Like hunted sheep shall fly: 210
 In vain the bold Epirotes
 Shall round their standards die:
 And Apennine's gray vultures
 Shall have a noble feast
 On the fat and the eyes 215
 Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

XXVI

“Hurrah! for the good weapons
That keep the War-god’s land.
Hurrah! for Rome’s stout pilum
In a stout Roman hand. 220
Hurrah! for Rome’s short broadsword,
That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
Hews deep its gory way.

XXVII

“Hurrah! for the great triumph 225
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the wan captives
That pass in endless file.
Ho! bold Epirotes, whither
Hath the Red King ta’en flight? 230
Ho! dogs of false Tarentum,
Is not the gown washed white?

XXVIII

“Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the rich dye of Tyre, 235
And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage
Torn from the pheasant’s wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
That shone on Indian kings, 240
The urns of massy silver,
The goblets rough with gold,

The many-colored tablets bright
 With loves and wars of old,
 The stone that breathes and struggles, 245
 The brass that seems to speak;—
 Such cunning they who dwell on high
 Hath given unto the Greek.

XXIX

“Hurrah! for Manius Curius,
 The bravest son of Rome, 250
 Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
 Thrice drawn in triumph home.
 Weave, weave, for Manius Curius
 The third embroidered gown:
 Make ready the third lofty car, 255
 And twine the third green crown;
 And yoke the steeds of Rosea
 With necks like a bended bow,
 And deck the bull, Mevania’s bull,
 The bull as white as snow. 260

XXX

“Blest and thrice blest the Roman
 Who sees Rome’s brightest day,
 Who sees that long victorious pomp
 Wind down the Sacred Way,
 And through the bellowing Forum, 265
 And round the Suppliant’s Grove,
 Up to the everlasting gates
 Of Capitolian Jove.

XXXI

“Then where, o’er two bright havens,
The towers of Corinth frown; 270
Where the gigantic King of Day
On his own Rhodes looks down
Where soft Orontes murmurs
Beneath the laurel shades;
Where Nile reflects the endless length 275
Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
Of Byrsa’s thousand masts; 280
Where fur-clad hunters wander
Amidst the northern ice;
Where through the sand of morning-land
The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow 285
Far o’er the western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
The mighty name of Rome.”

NOTES

HORATIUS

MACAULAY'S PREFACE

There can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetical origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. We have several versions of the story, and these versions differ from each other in points of no small importance. Polybius, there is reason to believe, heard the tale recited over the remains of some Consul or Prætor descended from the old Horatian patricians; for he introduces it as a specimen of the narratives with which the Romans were in the habit of embellishing their funeral oratory. It is remarkable that, according to him, Horatius defended the bridge alone, and perished in the waters. According to the chronicles which Livy and Dionysius followed, Horatius had two companions, swam safe to shore, and was loaded with honors and rewards.

These discrepancies are easily explained. Our own literature, indeed, will furnish an exact parallel to what may have taken place at Rome. It is highly probable that the memory of the war of Porsena was preserved by compositions much resembling the two ballads which stand first in the *Relics of Ancient English Poetry*. In both those ballads the English, commanded by the Percy, fight with the Scots, commanded by the Douglas. In one of the ballads the Douglas is killed by a nameless English archer, and the Percy by a Scottish spearman: in the other, the Percy slays the Douglas in single combat, and is himself made prisoner. In the former, Sir Hugh Montgomery is shot through the heart by a Northumbrian bowman: in the latter, he is taken, and exchanged for the Percy. Yet both the ballads relate to the same event, and that an event which probably took place within the memory of persons who were alive when both the ballads were made. One of the minstrels says:

“Old men that knowen the grounde well yenoughe
Call it the battell of Otterburn:
At Otterburn began this spurne
Upon a monnyn day.
Ther was the dougghte Doglas slean:
The Perse never went away.”

The other poet sums up the event in the following lines:

“Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne
Bytwene the nyghte and the day:
Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
And the Percy was lede away.”

It is by no means unlikely that there were two old Roman lays about the defence of the bridge; and that, while the story which Livy has transmitted to us was preferred by the multitude, the other, which ascribed the whole glory to Horatius alone, may have been the favorite with the Horatian house.

The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion, however, to the partial manner in which the public lands were allotted, could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem, and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus, after the taking of Veii, were regarded. . . .

Niebuhr's supposition, that each of the three defenders of the bridge was the representative of one of the three patrician tribes, is both ingenious and probable, and has been adopted in the following poem.

NOTES

On account of the wickedness of Sextus,—“false Sextus,” as he is called by Macaulay,—who ravished Lucretia, the Tarquins were banished from the city of Rome. Sextus made an appeal to Lars Porsena, the King of Clusium, the leading state in the confederacy of twelve Etruscan states, or cities. Lars Porsena came to the aid of the Tarquins, and the other Etruscan cities joined him, especial mention being made of his son-in-law, Mamilius of Tusculum. The combined armies of Etruria marched against Rome, and captured the Janiculum, a citadel which gave access to the Sublician bridge, and so to Rome. In order to save the city the bridge must be defended until it could be destroyed. This Horatius and his companions volunteered to

do; and then began the struggle between the brave defenders of the bridge and the besieging army.

TITLE. Year of the City CCCLX. Rome was founded B. C. 753. The year CCCLX would therefore be B. C. 393. The date commonly given for the defence of the bridge is B. C. 507. Macaulay supposes the Lay to have been made about one hundred and twenty years afterwards.

LINE 1.—Lars. An Etruscan word for *chieftain*, or *leader*.

5.—Nine Gods. The Etruscans, like the Romans, had several gods. The authorities of Macaulay's day seem to have regarded nine as the number of the chief gods.

6.—trysting day. A day set for a meeting.

26.—Volaterrae. An Etruscan city not far from the coast, with a famous fortress, 1700 feet above the sea.

30.—Populonia. A sea-coast city of Etruria.

34.—Pisae. A city of Etruria, in the extreme north, now known as Pisa.

36.—Massilia's triremes. Triremes were vessels with three banks of oars. Massilia is the modern Marseilles, in France.

37.—fair-haired slaves. The slaves were fair-haired Gauls, captives, sold into slavery.

38.—Clanis. A river in the south of Etruria, flowing into the Tiber.

40.—Cortona. A city in the eastern part of Etruria. It was a very important centre.

43.—Auser. A river in northern Etruria, now known as the Serchio.

45.—Ciminian hill. Hills thickly covered with forests. They were in central Etruria.

46.—Clitumnus. A river in Umbria. Its meadows were famous for white cattle, which were selected as victims in celebration of the triumph in Rome. See line 55.

49.—Volsinian. A lake in southern Etruria.

55.—milk-white steer. See note to line 46.

58.—Arretium. A city in the eastern part of Etruria, the modern Arezzo. It was one of the twelve cities of the League.

60.—Umbro. One of the largest rivers of Etruria, flowing into the Tyrrhene Sea.

62.—Luna. A city in the extreme north-west corner of Etruria.

63.—must. The fresh juice of the grapes.

66-73.—According to Niebuhr, the Etruscans were a priest-ridden people, and depended much on signs and auguries.

72.—**Traced from the right.** Etruscan writing ran from right to left.

80-81.—**Nurscia, etc.** Nurscia, or Nortia, was the Etruscan goddess of Fortune. The shields were the shield which fell from heaven and eleven others made exactly like it. On the preservation of this shield depended the welfare of Rome.

83.—**tale.** Number, or proportion.

86.—**Sutrium.** A city in the southern part of Etruria, the modern Sutri.

96.—**Mamilius.** See the general introductory note on the poem. **Tusculum** was a city of Latium, now in ruins.

98.—**yellow Tiber.** "Yellow" is a constant epithet of the river Tiber in the Latin writers. It is so called because of its yellow sands.

123.—**rock Tarpeian.** A high rock in Rome, from which criminals were frequently thrown.

126.—**Fathers of the City.** The *Patres Conscripti*, or Senators of the city of Rome.

133.—**Crustumerium.** A Sabine town a short distance up the Tiber from Rome.

134.—**Verbenna . . . Ostia.** Verbenna, one of the Etruscan leaders, according to Macaulay's account, came from Ostia, the port of Rome, at the mouth of the Tiber.

136.—**Astur . . . Janiculum.** Another Etruscan leader (according to Macaulay), Astur, had stormed Janiculum, the hill across the Tiber from Rome. It was connected with Rome by the Sublician bridge, which the heroes in our story defend.

142.—**Consul.** One of the two chief magistrates of Rome, elected annually by the people. They took the place of the banished kings.

147.—**River-Gate.** Probably in the wall of the city between the Tiber and the Capitoline Hill.

151.—**The bridge.** The **Pons Sublicius**. See note to line 136.

180.—**Umbrian.** The people of Umbria, a district lying to the east of Etruria.

181.—**Gaul.** The Gauls were barbarians who had conquered part of northern Italy.

185.—**Lucumo.** The title given to the hereditary chiefs of each of the twelve Etruscan cities.

186.—**Cilnus of Arretium.** See note to line 58.

188.—**Astur.** See note to line 136.

190-2.—**Tolumnius . . . Thrasymene.** This Lucumo, or leader, came from Lake Thrasymene, in the eastern part of Etruria.

199-200.—**false Sextus . . . shame.** See the general introductory note on the poem.

229-30.—**holy maidens.** The six priestesses of the goddess Vesta, who guarded the sacred fire.

237.—**strait.** Narrow.

241.—**Spurius Lartius.** He, with Horatius and Herminius, were the defenders of the bridge. See the last paragraph of Macaulay's Preface to the poem.

261.—The public lands, or *ager publicus*, were not always divided fairly. In line 542 this land is called the "cornland."

267.—**Tribunes.** The official representatives of the common people in the government of Rome.

274.—**harness.** Armor.

301-2.—**Aunus . . . Tifernum . . . Hill of Vines.** This stanza describes three of the adversaries of Horatius and his two companions. Tifernum, an Umbrian town on the Tiber.

303-4.—**Seius . . . Ilva.** Ilva is the island now called Elba, off the coast of Etruria. It was famous for its iron mines.

305-310.—**Picus . . . Nequinum . . . Nar.** Picus, one of the three opponents of Horatius and his companions, was from Nequinum, one of the most important cities in Umbria, situated on the Nar a few miles above the Nar's confluence with the Tiber.

319.—**Ocnus of Falerii.** This stanza describes three more of the Romans' adversaries. Falerii, a city in the southern part of Etruria.

321.—**Lausulus of Urgo.** Urgo, a small island twenty miles off the coast of Etruria, now called Gorgona.

323.—**Aruns of Volsinium.** Volsinium, a city in the south central region of Etruria.

326.—**Cosa.** A coast city in the southern part of Etruria.

328.—**Albinia.** A river of Etruria, flowing into the sea near the centre of the coast-line.

337.—**Campania.** A fertile district south of Rome.

348.—**Astur.** See line 136.

360.—**she-wolf's litter.** The Romans are so called because the legend of the City tells that Romulus and Remus, who founded Rome, were suckled by a she-wolf.

384.—**Alvernus.** Modern Alvernia, a rough and rocky hill between the sources of the Tiber and the Arno.

406.—**Etruria.** Another form of the name Etruscan or Tuscan.

488.—**Palatinus.** The Palatine Hill in the city of Rome.

525.—**Bore bravely up his chin.** Macaulay here refers in a note to the following parallel passages:

“Our ladye bare upp her chinne.”

Ballad of Childe Waters.

“Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force;

Yet, through good heart and our Lady's grace,
At length he gained the landing place.”

Scott, Lay of the Last Minstrel, I

542.—**corn-land.** See note to line 261.

550.—**Comitium.** The northern portion of the Roman Forum used for elections, law-suits, and public meetings.

561.—**Volscian.** Enemies of Rome, south of the Tiber.

562.—**Juno.** The wife of Jupiter, the mightiest of the Roman goddesses.

572.—**Algidus.** A range of mountains near Rome. They are celebrated by Horace for their oaks. Mount Albanus is near by.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS

MACAULAY'S PREFACE

The following poem is supposed to have been produced about ninety years after the lay of Horatius. Some persons mentioned in the lay of Horatius make their appearance again, and some appellations and epithets used in the lay of Horatius have been purposely repeated: for, in an age of ballad poetry, it scarcely ever fails to happen, that certain phrases come to be appropriated to certain men and things, and are regularly applied to those men and things by every minstrel. Thus we find, both in the Homeric poems and in Hesiod, βιη Ἡρακλειη, περικλύτος Ἀμφιγυηεις, διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντης, ἐπτάτυλος Θήβη, Ἐλένης ἕνεκ' ἠῦκόμοιο. Thus, too, in our own national songs, Douglas is almost always the doughty Douglas; England is merry England; all the gold is red; and all the ladies are gay.

The principal distinction between the lay of Horatius and the lay of the Lake Regillus is, that the former is meant to be purely Roman, while the latter, though national in its general spirit, has a slight tincture of Greek learning and of Greek superstition. The story of the Tarquins, as it has come down to us, appears to have been compiled from the works of several popular poets; and one, at least, of those poets appears to have visited the Greek colonies in Italy, if not Greece itself, and to have had some acquaintance with the works of Homer and Herodotus. Many of the most striking adventures of the house of Tarquin, before Lucretia makes her appearance, have a Greek character. The Tarquins themselves are represented as Corinthian nobles of the great house of the Bacchiadæ, driven from their country by the tyranny of that Cypselus, the tale of whose strange escape Herodotus has related with incomparable simplicity and liveliness. Livy and Dionysius tell us that, when Tarquin the Proud was asked what was the best mode of governing a conquered city, he replied only by beating down with his staff all the tallest poppies in his garden. This is exactly what Herodotus, in the passage to which reference has already been made, relates of the counsel given to Periander, the son of Cypselus. The stratagem by which the town of Gabii is brought under the power of the Tarquins is, again, obviously copied from Herodotus. The embassy of the young Tarquins to the oracle at Delphi is just such a story as would be told by a poet whose head was full of the Greek mythology; and the ambiguous answer returned by Apollo is in the exact style of the prophecies which, according to Herodotus, lured Cræsus to destruction. Then the character of the narrative changes. From the first mention of Lucretia to the retreat of Porsena nothing seems to be borrowed from foreign sources. The villany of Sextus, the suicide of his victim, the revolution, the death of the sons of Brutus, the defence of the bridge, Mucius burning his hand, Clælia swimming through Tiber, seem to be all strictly Roman. But when we have done with the Tuscan war, and enter upon the war with the Latines, we are again struck by the Greek air of the story. The Battle of the Lake Regillus is in all respects a Homeric battle, except that the combatants ride astride on their horses, instead of driving chariots. The mass of fighting men is hardly mentioned. The leaders single each other out, and engage hand to hand. The great object of the warriors on both sides is, as in the Iliad, to obtain posses-

sion of the spoils and bodies of the slain; and several circumstances are related which forcibly remind us of the great slaughter round the corpses of Sarpedon and Patroclus. . . .

In the following poem, therefore, images and incidents have been borrowed, not merely without scruple, but on principle, from the incomparable battle-pieces of Homer.

The popular belief at Rome, from an early period, seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it was said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterward carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honor on the Ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

How the legend originated cannot now be ascertained: but we may easily imagine several ways in which it might have originated; nor is it at all necessary to suppose, with Julius Frontinus, that two young men were dressed up by the Dictator to personate the sons of Leda. It is probable that Livy is correct when he says that the Roman general, in the hour of peril, vowed a temple to Castor. If so, nothing could be more natural than that the multitude should ascribe the victory to the favor of the Twin Gods. When such was the prevailing sentiment, any man who chose to declare that, in the midst of the confusion and slaughter, he had seen two godlike forms on white horses scattering the Latines, would find ready credence. We know, indeed, that, in modern times, a very similar story actually found credence among a people much more civilized than the Romans of the fifth century before Christ. A chaplain of Cortes, writing about thirty years after the conquest of Mexico, in an age of printing presses, libraries, universities, scholars, logicians, jurists, and statesmen, had the face to assert that, in one engagement against the Indians, Saint James had appeared on a gray horse at the head of the Castilian adventurers. Many of those adventurers were living when this lie was printed.

One of them, honest Bernal Diaz, wrote an account of the expedition. He had the evidence of his own senses against the legend; but he seems to have distrusted even the evidence of his own senses. He says that he was in the battle, and that he saw a gray horse with a man on his back, but that the man was, to his thinking, Francesco de Morla, and not the ever-blessed apostle Saint James. "Nevertheless," Bernal adds, "it may be that the person on the gray horse was the glorious apostle Saint James, and that I, sinner that I am, was unworthy to see him." The Romans of the age of Cincinnatus were probably quite as credulous as the Spanish subjects of Charles the Fifth. It is therefore conceivable that the appearance of Castor and Pollux may have become an article of faith before the generation which had fought at Regillus had passed away. Nor could anything be more natural than that the poets of the next age should embellish this story, and make the celestial horsemen bear the tidings of victory to Rome.

Many years after the temple of the Twin Gods had been built in the Forum, an important addition was made to the ceremonial by which the state annually testified its gratitude for their protection. Quintus Fabius and Publius Decius were elected Censors at a momentous crisis. It had become absolutely necessary that the classification of the citizens should be revised. On that classification depended the distribution of political power. Party-spirit ran high; and the republic seemed to be in danger of falling under the dominion either of a narrow oligarchy or of an ignorant and headstrong rabble. Under such circumstances, the most illustrious patrician and the most illustrious plebeian of the age were entrusted with the office of arbitrating between the angry factions; and they performed their arduous task to the satisfaction of all honest and reasonable men.

One of their reforms was a remodelling of the equestrian order; and, having effected this reform, they determined to give to their work a sanction derived from religion. In the chivalrous societies of modern times, societies which have much more than may at first sight appear in common with the equestrian order of Rome, it has been usual to invoke the special protection of some Saint, and to observe his day with peculiar solemnity. Thus the Companions of the Garter wear the image of Saint George depending from their collars, and meet, on great occasions, in Saint George's Chapel. Thus, when Lewis the

Fourteenth instituted a new order of chivalry for the rewarding of military merit, he commended it to the favor of his own glorified ancestor and patron, and decreed that all the members of the fraternity should meet at the royal palace on the feast of Saint Lewis, should attend the king to chapel, should hear mass, and should subsequently hold their great annual assembly. There is a considerable resemblance between this rule of the order of Saint Lewis and the rule which Fabius and Decius made respecting the Roman knights. It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body should be part of the ceremonial performed, on the anniversary of the battle of Regillus, in honor of Castor and Pollux, the two equestrian Gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at a temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the temple of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. In the time of Dionysius the cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune.

There can be no doubt that the Censors who instituted this august ceremony acted in concert with the Pontiffs to whom, by the constitution of Rome, the superintendence of the public worship belonged; and it is probable that those high religious functionaries were, as usual, fortunate enough to find in their books or traditions some warrant for the innovation.

The following poem is supposed to have been made for this great occasion. Songs, we know, were chanted at the religious festivals of Rome from an early period; indeed from so early a period, that some of the sacred verses were popularly ascribed to Numa, and were utterly unintelligible in the age of Augustus. In the Second Punic War a great feast was held in honor of Juno, and a song was sung in her praise. This song was extant when Livy wrote; and, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, seemed to him not wholly destitute of merit. A song, as we learn from Horace, was part of the established ritual at the great Secular Jubilee. It is therefore likely that the Censors and Pontiffs, when they had resolved to add a grand procession of knights to the other solemnities annually performed on the Ides of Quintilis, would call in the aid of a poet. Such a poet would naturally take for his subject the battle of Regillus, the appearance of the Twin Gods, and the institution of their festival. He would find abundant materials in the ballads of his prede-

cessors; and he would make free use of the scanty stock of Greek learning which he had himself acquired. He would probably introduce some wise and holy Pontiff enjoining the magnificent ceremonial, which, after a long interval, had at length been adopted. If the poem succeeded, many persons would commit it to memory. Parts of it would be sung to the pipe at banquets. It would be peculiarly interesting to the great Posthumian House, which numbered among its many images that of the Dictator Aulus, the hero of Regillus. The orator who, in the following generation, pronounced the funeral panegyric over the remains of Lucius Posthumius Megellus, thrice Consul, would borrow largely from the lay; and thus some passages, much disfigured, would probably find their way into the chronicles which were afterward in the hands of Dionysius and Livy.

Antiquaries differ widely as to the situation of the field of battle. The opinion of those who suppose that the armies met near Cornufelle, between Frascati and the Monte Porzio, is at least plausible, and has been followed in the poem.

As to the details of the battle, it has not been thought desirable to adhere minutely to the accounts which have come down to us. Those accounts, indeed, differ widely from each other, and, in all probability, differ as widely from the ancient poem from which they were originally derived.

It is unnecessary to point out the obvious imitations of the *Iliad*, which have been purposely introduced.

NOTES

This Lay narrates the last battle in the struggle between Rome and her powerful rival Latium. The favor of heaven was shown to Rome by the intervention in her behalf of Castor and Pollux, who caused the defeat of the Latins and carried the news of the glorious victory to Rome. This battle was fought in the year of the city 255 or 258. Niebuhr, from whom Macaulay borrowed so much, says of this battle:

“The battle of Lake Regillus, as described by Livy, is not an engagement between two armies; it is a conflict of heroes like those in the *Iliad*. All the leaders encounter hand to hand, and by them the victory is thrown now into one scale, now into the other; while the troops fight without any effect.”¹

¹ *History of Rome*, I, 546-547.

This is the spirit in which Macaulay conceives the story. He supposes the Lay to be sung on the anniversary of the battle, in honor of Castor and Pollux, in the year of the city 451, or B. C. 302.

TITLE.—**Lake Regillus.** A small lake in Latium, at the foot of the Tuscan hills.

—**Ides of Quintilis.** July 15.

LINE 2.—**lictors.** Attendants on a magistrate, as a token of official dignity. They carried rods and axes as a sign of their authority.

3.—**Knights.** See Macaulay's Preface to the poem.

7.—**Castor in the Forum.** The temple of Castor.

13.—**Yellow River.** The Tiber. It is called yellow on account of its yellow sands.

14.—**Sacred Hill.** A hill three miles from Rome on the river Anio, to which the plebeians repaired in their struggle for liberty.

15.—**Ides of Quintilis.** July 15, See note on the Title.

17.—**Martian Kalends.** The first of March.

18.—**December's Nones.** December the fifth.

20.—**whitest.** Most noted.

25.—**Parthenius.** A mountain range in Arcadia.

27.—**Cirrha . . . Adria.** Cirrha, a town in Phocis in Greece. Adria is the poetical form of Adriatic.

28.—**Apennine.** The well-known range of mountains in Etruria.

31-32.—**Lacedaemon . . . kings.** Sparta, one of whose kings, Tyndareus, was the father of Castor and Pollux. The Heraclidae established the system of dual kingship, or government by two kings.

34.—**Porcian.** Cato the Censor, who belonged to the Porcian family, was born in Tusculum.

35.—**Tusculum.** An ancient city of Latium situated in the Alban Hills.

42.—**Corne.** The Corniculani mountains.

43.—**Fair Fount.** Apparently a name invented by Macaulay.

63-64.—**Thirty Cities . . . Rome.** According to Pliny, there were thirty cities, or communities, in Latium.

81.—**Virginus.** Who, with his fellow-consul Aulus, destroyed Camerium, B. C. 502.

83-84.—**Aulus . . . Posthumian.** See note to line 81.

- 86.—**Gabii**. A city of Latium, about twelve miles from Rome.
- 119.—**Conscript Fathers**. The members of the Patricians, or nobles, whose names were written on the roll of the Senate.
- 125.—**Camerium**. An ancient town of Latium.
- 132.—**axes**. See note to line 2.
- 165.—**Setia**. A city of Latium, on the southern slope of the Volscian mountains.
- 166.—**Norba**.—A city of Latium, about midway between Cora and Setia. See notes to lines 165 and 183.
- 169.—**Witch's Fortress**. Circeii, near the promontory of that name on the coast of Latium. It was so called because it was said to be the haunt of the witch Circe after her flight from Greece.
- 171.—**still glassy lake**. Lake Nemus, famous because of its beauty, and because of the temple of Venus on its shore.
- 172.—**Aricia**. A famous city of Latium, situated on the Appian Way, at the foot of the Alban Mount.
- 173, ff.—A tradition variously told, but of which the substance is that a runaway slave became the priest by slaying his predecessor, and remained priest of the grove and shrine until he himself was slain.
- 177.—**Ufens**. A river of Latium, rising at the foot of the Volscian mountains. It flows through the Pontine marshes. Hence its banks are “drear,” and haunted by flights of “marsh-fowl.”
- 183.—**Cora**. A city of Latium, situated on the Appian Way, now Cori.
- 185.—**Laurentian**. Of or belonging to Laurentum, a city of Latium on the sea-coast.
- 187.—**Anio**. A famous river of Latium, and an important tributary of the Tiber.
- 190.—**Velitrae**. A city of Latium, situated on the southern slope of the Alban hills.
- 201.—**land of sunrise**. In the East, as in Syria.
- 202.—**By Syria's dark-browed daughters**. The choicest purple garments came from Tyre in Syria.
- 203.—**Carthage**. The African city, which was the most famous rival of Rome.
- 205.—**Lavinium**. A city near the sea, about seventeen miles south of Rome.
- 209-10.—**false Sextus . . . deed of shame**. Almost a repetition of lines 199-200 of *Horatius*. In this stanza are given the visions of fear which possessed “false Sextus” because of the “deed of shame” which he committed against Lucretia.

233.—**Tibur . . . Pedum.** The people of two ancient towns in Latium.

235.—**Ferentinum.** A small town in Latium. It was so solitary that the name was used to signify a solitary country.

236.—**Gabii.** A small town of Latium, founded by the Sicilians.

237.—**Volscian.** The most important tribe in Latium.

241.—**Mount Soracte.** A high mountain in Etruria, often spoken of in Latin literature, and famous because it is mentioned by Horace in a famous Ode (Ode 9, Book I).

250.—**Apulian.** Apulia was a province in lower Italy.

263.—**Pomptine.** The Pontine marshes extended over the low-lying portions of Latium.

278.—**Digentian.** The Digentia was a small stream which flowed past Horace's villa and fell into Anio river.

280.—**Bandusia.** A fountain celebrated by Horace in one of his famous Odes (Ode 3, Book III).

288.—**Fidenæ.** An ancient city of Latium near Rome.

294.—**Calabrian.** Calabria is a province in the south of Italy.

299.—**Lavinian.** A city of Latium, near the sea-coast.

331-332.—**Men say, etc.** A heroic incident perhaps borrowed from the English ballad, as for instance, Johnny Armstrong, who fights even after his legs are hewn to the knees.

362.—**Velian.** An elevated part of the Palatine Hill in Rome.

399.—**play the men.** Show yourselves to be brave men.

419.—**Cossus.** A famous Roman name.

459-460.—**Beneath . . . well.** This, of course, refers to the noble story, as Macaulay tells it in *Horatius*.

466.—**Crest of Flame.** The shining crest of the Latin hero.

480.—**Aufidus . . . Po.** This means the whole region of Central Italy, as these rivers enclose that territory on the south and north, respectively.

603.—**Samothracia.** An island near the coast of Thrace, in Greece.

604.—**Cyrene.** An important city in north Africa.

605.—**Tarentum.** A powerful city in Lower Italy.

607.—**Syracuse.** A famous city in Sicily.

609.—**Eurotas.** This is the same thing as saying that Sparta was their native home. Sparta was situated on the river Eurotas.

619.—**Ardea.** A city of Latium.

623.—**Vesta.** The goddess of the hearth and its fire; hence the goddess of the household.

624.—**Golden Shield.** The divine shield of Mars, which, according to the Roman tradition, fell from heaven. On its preservation the safety of the city depended.

645-646.—**Po . . . Celtic.** The region of the Po was occupied by people of Celtic blood. Pliny says that the name is Celtic.

648.—**Adrian main.** The Adriatic Sea.

649.—**Sire Quirinus.** The name of Romulus after his deification.

660.—**Lanuvium.** A town in Latium near the Appian Way, twenty miles from Rome.

661.—**Nomentum.** A Sabine city, about fourteen miles from Rome.

673.—**Arpinum.** A famous Volscian city, the birthplace of Cicero.

676.—**Anxur.** A city of Latium, near the sea. It was known to the Romans by the name of Tarracina.

679.—**Laurentum.** See note to line 185.

690.—**Eastern Gate.** That is, the eastern gate of the city of Rome.

697.—**Sergius, the High Pontiff.** The Roman term was *Pontifex Maximus*.

721.—**great Asylum.** A place of refuge on the Capitoline Hill, where fugitives could find safety, said to have been opened by Romulus to attract population to the city.

747.—**the well.** The Pool, or Lake, of Juturna, situated between the temple of Vesta and the temple of Castor.

760.—**Dorians.** An important Greek tribe of Lacedaemon, who conquered the whole Peloponnesus, including Sparta.

774.—**stately dome.** The temple of Castor and Pollux. See note on line 7.

VIRGINIA

MACAULAY'S PREFACE

A collection consisting exclusively of war-songs would give an imperfect, or rather an erroneous, notion of the spirit of the old Latin ballads. The Patricians, during more than a century after the expulsion of the Kings, held all the high military com-

mands. A Plebeian, even though, like Lucius Siccus, he were distinguished by his valor and knowledge of war, could serve only in subordinate posts. A minstrel, therefore, who wished to celebrate the early triumphs of his country, could hardly take any but Patricians for his heroes. The warriors who are mentioned in the two preceding lays, Horatius, Lartius, Herminius, Aulus Posthumus, Æbutius Elva, Sempronius Atratinus, Valerius Poplicola, were all members of the dominant order; and a poet who was singing their praises, whatever his own political opinions might be, would naturally abstain from insulting the class to which they belonged, and from reflecting on the system which had placed such men at the head of the legions of the Commonwealth.

But there was a class of compositions in which the great families were by no means so courteously treated. No parts of early Roman history are richer with poetical coloring than those which relate to the long contest between the privileged houses and the commonalty. The population of Rome was, from a very early period, divided into hereditary castes, which, indeed, readily united to repel foreign enemies, but which regarded each other, during many years, with bitter animosity. Between those castes there was a barrier hardly less strong than that which, at Venice, parted the members of the Great Council from their countrymen. In some respects, indeed, the line which separated an Icilius or a Duilius from a Posthumus or a Fabius was even more deeply marked than that which separated the rower of a gondola from a Contarini or a Morosini. At Venice the distinction was merely civil. At Rome it was both civil and religious. Among the grievances under which the Plebeians suffered, three were felt as peculiarly severe. They were excluded from the highest magistracies, they were excluded from all share in the public lands; and they were ground down to the dust by partial and barbarous legislation touching pecuniary contracts. The ruling class in Rome was a monied class; and it made and administered the laws with a view solely to its own interest. Thus the relation between lender and borrower was mixed up with the relation between sovereign and subject. The great men held a large portion of the community in dependence by means of advances at enormous usury. The law of debt, framed by creditors, and for the protection of creditors, was the most horrible that has ever been known among men. The liberty, and even the life, of the

insolvent were at the mercy of the Patrician money-lenders. Children often became slaves in consequence of the misfortunes of their parents. The debtor was imprisoned, not in a public gaol under the care of impartial public functionaries, but in a private workhouse belonging to the creditor. Frightful stories were told respecting these dungeons. It was said that torture and brutal violation were common; that tight stocks, heavy chains, scanty measures of food, were used to punish wretches guilty of nothing but poverty; and that brave soldiers, whose breasts were covered with honorable scars, were often marked still more deeply on the back by the scourges of high-born usurers.

The Plebeians were, however, not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. They were enrolled each in his century, and were allowed a share, considerable though not proportioned to their numerical strength, in the disposal of those high dignities from which they were themselves excluded. Thus their position bore some resemblance to that of the Irish Catholics during the interval between the year 1792 and the year 1829. The Plebeians had also the privilege of annually appointing officers, named Tribunes, who had no active share in the government of the Commonwealth, but who, by degrees, acquired a power formidable even to the ablest and most resolute Consuls and Dictators. The person of the Tribune was inviolable; and though he could directly effect little, he could obstruct everything.

During more than a century after the institution of the Tribuneship, the Commons struggled manfully for the removal of the grievances under which they labored; and, in spite of many checks and reverses, succeeded in wringing concession after concession from the stubborn aristocracy. At length in the year of the city 378, both parties mustered their whole strength for their last and most desperate conflict. The popular and active Tribune, Caius Licinius, proposed the three memorable laws which are called by his name, and which were intended to redress the three great evils of which the Plebeians complained. He was supported with eminent ability and firmness by his colleague, Lucius Sextius. The struggle appears to have been the fiercest that ever in any community terminated without an appeal to arms. If such a contest had raged in any Greek city, the streets would have run with blood. But, even

in the paroxysms of faction, the Roman retained his gravity, his respect for law, and his tenderness for the lives of his fellow-citizens. Year after year Licinius and Sextius were re-elected Tribunes. Year after year, if the narrative which has come down to us is to be trusted, they continued to exert, to the full extent, their power of stopping the whole machine of government. No curule magistrates could be chosen; no military muster could be held. We know too little of the state of Rome in those days to be able to conjecture how, during that long anarchy, the peace was kept, and ordinary justice administered between man and man. The animosity of both parties rose to the greatest height. The excitement, we may well suppose, would have been peculiarly intense at the annual election of Tribunes. On such occasions there can be little doubt that the great families did all that could be done, by threats and caresses, to break the union of the Plebeians. That union, however, proved indissoluble. At length the good cause triumphed. The Licinian laws were carried. Lucius Sextius was the first Plebeian Consul, Caius Licinius the third.

The results of this great change were singularly happy and glorious. Two centuries of prosperity, harmony, and victory followed the reconciliation of the orders. Men who remembered Rome engaged in waging petty wars almost within sight of the Capitol lived to see her the mistress of Italy. While the disabilities of the Plebeians continued, she was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon.

During the great Licinian contest the Plebeian poets were, doubtless, not silent. Even in modern times songs have been by no means without influence on public affairs; and we may therefore infer that, in a society where printing was unknown, and where books were rare, a pathetic or humorous party-ballad must have produced effects such as we can but faintly conceive. It is certain that satirical poems were common at Rome from a very early period. The rustics, who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and took little part in the strife of factions, gave vent to their petty local animosities in coarse Fescennine verse. The lampoons of the city were doubtless of a higher order; and their sting was early felt by the nobility. For in the Twelve Tables, long before the time of the Licinian laws, a severe punishment was denounced against the citizen

who should compose or recite verses reflecting on another. Satire is, indeed, the only sort of composition in which the Latin poets, whose works have come down to us, were not mere imitators of foreign models; and it is therefore the only sort of composition in which they have never been rivalled. It was not, like their tragedy, their comedy, their epic and lyric poetry, a hothouse plant which, in return for assiduous and skilful culture, gave only scanty and sickly fruits. It was hardy and full of sap; and in all the various juices which it yielded might be distinguished the flavor of the Ausonian soil. "Satire," says Quintilian, with just pride, "is all our own." Satire sprang, in truth, naturally from the constitution of the Roman government and from the spirit of the Roman people; and, though at length subjected to metrical rules derived from Greece, retained to the last an essentially Roman character. Lucilius was the earliest satirist whose works were held in esteem under the Cæsars. But many years before Lucilius was born, Nævius had been flung into a dungeon, and guarded there with circumstances of unusual rigor, on account of the bitter lines in which he had attacked the great Cæcilian family. The genius and spirit of the Roman satirist survived the liberty of their country, and were not extinguished by the cruel despotism of the Julian and Flavian Emperors. The great poet who told the story of Domitian's turbot was the legitimate successor of those forgotten minstrels whose songs animated the factions of the infant Republic.

These minstrels, as Niebuhr has remarked, appear to have generally taken the popular side. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that, at the great crisis of the civil conflict, they employed themselves in versifying all the most powerful and virulent speeches of the Tribunes, and in heaping abuse on the leaders of the aristocracy. Every personal defect, every domestic scandal, every tradition dishonorable to a noble house, would be sought out, brought into notice, and exaggerated. The illustrious head of the aristocratical party, Marcus Furius Camillus, might perhaps be, in some measure, protected by his venerable age and by the memory of his great services to the State. But Appius Claudius Crassus enjoyed no such immunity. He was descended from a long line of ancestors distinguished by their haughty demeanor, and by the inflexibility with which they had withstood all the demands of the Plebeian order. While the political conduct and the deportment of the Claudian nobles

drew upon them the fiercest public hatred, they were accused of wanting, if any credit is due to the early history of Rome, a class of qualities which, in the military commonwealth, is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences. The chiefs of the family appear to have been eloquent, versed in civil business, and learned after the fashion of their age; but in war they were not distinguished by skill or valor. Some of them, as if conscious where their weakness lay, had, when filling the highest magistracies, taken internal administration as their department of public business, and left the military command to their colleagues.¹ One of them had been intrusted with an army, and had failed ignominiously.² None of them had been honored with a triumph. None of them had achieved any martial exploit, such as those by which Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, Titus Quinctius Capitolinus, Aulus Cornelius Cossus, and, above all, the great Camillus, had extorted the reluctant esteem of the multitude. During the Licinian conflict, Appius Claudius Crassus signalized himself by the ability and severity with which he harangued against the two great agitators. He would naturally, therefore, be the favorite mark of the Plebeian satirists; nor would they have been at a loss to find a point on which he was open to attack.

His grandfather, called, like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. This elder Appius had been Consul more than seventy years before the introduction of the Licinian laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the Commons to the abolition of the Tribuneship, and had been the chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the State had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It had been swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury; and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius upon the chastity of a beautiful young girl of humble birth. The story ran that the Decemvir, unable to succeed by bribes and solicitations, resorted to an outrageous act of tyranny. A vile dependent of the Claudian house laid claim to the damsel as his slave. The cause was brought before the tribunal of

¹ In the years of the city 260, 304, and 330.

² In the year of the city 280

Appius. The wicked magistrate, in defiance of the clearest proofs, gave judgment for the claimant. But the girl's father, a brave soldier, saved her from servitude and dishonor by stabbing her to the heart in the sight of the whole Forum. That blow was the signal for a general explosion. Camp and city rose at once; the Ten were pulled down; the Tribuneship was re-established; and Appius escaped the hands of the executioner only by a voluntary death.

It can hardly be doubted that a story so admirably adapted to the purposes both of the poet and of the demagogue would be eagerly seized upon by minstrels burning with hatred against the Patrician order, against the Claudian house, and especially against the grandson and namesake of the infamous Decemvir.

In order that the reader may judge fairly of these fragments of the lay of Virginia, he must imagine himself a Plebeian who has just voted for the re-election of Sextius and Licinius. All the power of the Patricians has been exerted to throw out the two great champions of the Commons. Every Posthumius, Æmilius, and Cornelius has used his influence to the utmost. Debtors have been let out of the workhouses on condition of voting against the men of the people: clients have been posted to hiss and interrupt the favorite candidates: Appius Claudius Crassus has spoken with more than his usual eloquence and asperity: all has been in vain; Licinius and Sextius have a fifth time carried all the tribes: work is suspended: the booths are closed: the Plebeians bear on their shoulders the two champions of liberty through the Forum. Just at this moment it is announced that a popular poet, a zealous adherent of the Tribunes, has made a new song which will cut the Claudian nobles to the heart. The crowd gathers round him, and calls on him to recite it. He takes his stand on the spot where, according to tradition, Virginia, more than seventy years ago, was seized by the pandar of Appius, and he begins his story.

NOTES

This Lay deals with the wicked deed of Appius Claudius Crassus. The events with which it deals led to the re-establishment of the Tribuneship, and after the repeated election of Sextius and Licinius as Tribunes, or representatives of the common people, the popular cause triumphed in the passing of the Licinian laws, which secured the rights of the common people.

The long line in which *Virginia* is written may be reduced to the line of the other Lays by the simple process of dividing each one in the middle.

TITLE—Fragments. The lay purports to be only fragments. The breaks in the text and the apparent incompleteness at the end are indications by Macaulay that this is but a series of fragments.

—**Year of the City CCCLXXXII.** B. C. 371.

Lines 4–6.—Grecian fable, etc. This probably refers to a story of Dionysus, told in the Homeric Hymn to Dionysus. **maids with snaky tresses.** The Furies. **sailors turned to swine.** Circe in Homer's *Odyssey*, turned her victims to swine.

10.—wicked Ten. The Council of Ten, which was established after the abolition of the Tribuneship, by Appius Claudius, grandfather of the Appius Claudius of the Lay.

14.—Twelve axes. That is, twelve lictors bearing rods and axes as a sign of their authority.

20.—Marcus. See Macaulay's Preface to the poem, where he is called "a vile dependent of the Claudian house."

24.—Licinius. See Macaulay's Preface to the poem. Licinius and Sextius were Tribunes who maintained the rights of the common people.

35.—Sacred Street. The famous *Via Sacra*, in Rome.

36.—She warbled gaily, etc. Macaulay represents Virginia as singing "the good old song" of the rape of Lucrece, or Lucretia.

46.—Seven Hills. Rome was built on seven hills.

53.—tablets. The waxen writing-tablets used by the school children of Rome.

63–66.—Crispus, Hanno, Muraena, Volero. Macaulay gives names to the leading figures in the crowd, for the sake of vividness. **Flesher,** butcher, a term still used in Scotland.

64.—Punic. Carthaginian, or from Carthage.

83.—Sextius. See note to line 24 and Macaulay's Preface to the poem.

87.—Icilius. The young man to whom Virginia was betrothed.

95.—Servius. Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, a traditional reformer of the constitution.

97.—false sons. The two sons of Brutus who headed a conspiracy and were beheaded by order of their father.

98.—Scaevola. Mucius Scaevola went to the Etruscan camp to kill Lars Porsena. He was discovered and held his right

hand in the fire to show that he was not dismayed. Hence he was called Scaevola or "Left-handed."

104.—**Marcian fury.** This refers to the banishment of Coriolanus, who joined the Volscians to humble the city.

—**Fabian pride.** The soldiers of Caeso Fabius refused to obey his orders and thereby deprived him of a victory.

105.—**Quinctius.** He was banished from Rome by the common people.

106.—**Claudius . . . fasces.** Claudius was mobbed in the streets of Rome. The fasces are the rods and axes of the lictors.

115.—**fillets.** Bands worn on the hair by the priests.

—**purple gown.** The purple gown was worn by the consul and knights on public occasions.

116.—**curule chair.** The chair of state.

132.—**cars.** The chariots, in which noble Romans rode in triumphs.

133.—**Corinthian mirrors.** Corinth was noted for its luxuries. A mirror was a luxury to an early Roman.

134.—**Capuan odors . . . Spanish gold.** The city of Capua was celebrated for its luxurious mode of life. The mines of Spain were famous for their precious metals.

150.—**whittle.** A large butcher's knife, or cleaver.

228.—**Pincian Hill . . . Latin Gate.** The North and South-east gates, respectively.

249.—**Caius of Corioli.** Better known as Coriolanus.

251.—**Furius.** His full name was Marcus Furius of Tusculum. He freed Rome from the invasions of the Gauls.

257-8.—**Cossus . . . Fabius.** The names of families famous for their bravery.

277.—**Calabrian.** Calabria is a region in the southern end of Italy.

278.—**Thunder-Cape.** Acroceraunia, a rocky promontory on the coast of Greece opposite the Italian city of Brundisium, or Brindisi.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS

MACAULAY'S PREFACE

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that, according to the popular tradition, Romulus, after he had slain his grand-uncle Amulius, and restored his grandfather Numitor, determined to quit Alba, the hereditary domain of the Sylvian

princes, and to found a new city. The Gods, it was added, vouchsafed the clearest signs of the favor with which they regarded the enterprise, and of the high destinies reserved for the young colony.

This event was likely to be a favorite theme of the old Latin minstrels. They would naturally attribute the project of Romulus to some divine intimation of the power and prosperity which it was decreed that his city should attain. They would probably introduce seers foretelling the victories of unborn Consuls and Dictators, and the last great victory would generally occupy the most conspicuous place in the prediction. There is nothing strange in the supposition that the poet who was employed to celebrate the first great triumph of the Romans over the Greeks might throw his song of exultation into this form.

The occasion was one likely to excite the strongest feelings of national pride. A great outrage had been followed by a great retribution. Seven years before this time, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who sprang from one of the noblest houses of Rome, and had been thrice Consul, was sent ambassador to Tarentum, with charge to demand reparation for grievous injuries. The Tarentines gave him audience in their theatre, where he addressed them in such Greek as he could command, which, we may well believe, was not exactly such as Cineas would have spoken. An exquisite sense of the ridiculous belonged to the Greek character: and closely connected with this faculty was a strong propensity to flippancy and impertinence. When Posthumius placed an accent wrong, his hearers burst into a laugh. When he remonstrated, they hooted him, and called him barbarian; and at length hissed him off the stage as if he had been a bad actor. As the grave Roman retired, a buffoon, who, from his constant drunkenness, was nicknamed the Pint pot, came up with gestures of the grossest indecency, and bespattered the senatorial gown with filth. Posthumius turned round to the multitude, and held up the gown, as if appealing to the universal law of nations. The sight only increased the insolence of the Tarentines. They clapped their hands, and set up a shout of laughter which shook the theatre. "Men of Tarentum," said Posthumius, "it will take not a little blood to wash this gown."

Rome, in consequence of this insult, declared war against the Tarentines. The Tarentines sought for allies beyond the Ionian Sea. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, came to their help with a large

army; and, for the first time, the two great nations of antiquity were fairly matched against each other.

The fame of Greece in arms, as well as in arts, was then at the height. Half a century earlier, the career of Alexander had excited the admiration and terror of all nations from the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules. Royal houses, founded by Macedonian captains, still reigned at Antioch and Alexandria. That barbarian warriors, led by barbarian chiefs, should win a pitched battle against Greek valor guided by Greek science, seemed as incredible as it would now seem that the Burmese or the Siamese should, in the open plain, put to flight an equal number of the best English troops. The Tarentines were convinced that their countrymen were irresistible in war; and this conviction had emboldened them to treat with the grossest indignity one whom they regarded as the representative of an inferior race. Of the Greek generals then living, Pyrrhus was indisputably the first. Among the troops who were trained in the Greek discipline, his Epirotes ranked high. His expedition to Italy was a turning-point in the history of the world. He found there a people who, far inferior to the Athenians and Corinthians in the fine arts, in the speculative sciences, and in all the refinements of life, were the best soldiers on the face of the earth. Their arms, their gradations of rank, their order of battle, their method of intrenchment, were all of Latian origin, and had all been gradually brought near to perfection, not by the study of foreign models, but by the genius and experience of many generations of great native commanders. The first words which broke from the king, when his practised eye had surveyed the Roman encampment, were full of meaning:—"These barbarians," he said, "have nothing barbarous in their military arrangements." He was at first victorious; for his own talents were superior to those of the captains who were opposed to him; and the Romans were not prepared for the onset of the elephants of the East, which were then for the first time seen in Italy—moving mountains, with long snakes for hands.¹ But the victories of the Epirotes were fiercely disputed, dearly purchased, and altogether unprofitable. At length, Manius Curius Dentatus, who had in his first Consulship won two triumphs, was again placed at the head of the Roman Commonwealth, and sent to encounter the invaders. A great battle was fought near Beneventum. Pyrrhus was completely defeated. He

¹ *Anguimanus* is the old Latin epithet for an elephant. *Lucretius*, ii. 538, v. 1302.

repassed the sea; and the world learned, with amazement, that a people had been discovered, who, in fair fighting, were superior to the best troops that had been drilled on the system of Parmenio and Antigonus.

The conquerors had a good right to exult in their success; for their glory was all their own. They had not learned from their enemy how to conquer him. It was with their own national arms, and in their own national battle-array, that they had overcome weapons and tactics long believed to be invincible. The pilum and the broadsword had vanquished the Macedonian spear. The legion had broken the Macedonian phalanx. Even the elephants, when the surprise produced by their first appearance was over, could cause no disorder in the steady yet flexible battalions of Rome.

It is said by Florus, and may easily be believed, that the triumph far surpassed in magnificence any that Rome had previously seen. The only spoils which Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus could exhibit were flocks and herds, wagons of rude structure, and heaps of spears and helmets. But now, for the first time, the riches of Asia and the arts of Greece adorned a Roman pageant. Plate, fine stuffs, costly furniture, rare animals, exquisite paintings and sculptures, formed part of the procession. At the banquet would be assembled a crowd of warriors and statesmen, among whom Manius Curius Dentatus would take the highest room. Caius Fabricius Luscinus, then, after two Consulships and two triumphs, Censor of the Commonwealth, would doubtless occupy a place of honor at the board. In situations less conspicuous probably lay some of those who were, a few years later, the terror of Carthage; Caius Duilius, the founder of the maritime greatness of his country; Marcus Atilius Regulus, who owed to defeat a renown far higher than that which he had derived from his victories; and Caius Lutatius Catulus, who, while suffering from a grievous wound, fought the great battle of the Ægates, and brought the first Punic war to a triumphant close. It is impossible to recount the names of these eminent citizens, without reflecting that they were all, without exception, Plebeians, and would, but for the ever-memorable struggle maintained by Caius Licinius and Lucius Sextius, have been doomed to hide in obscurity, or to waste in civil broils, the capacity and energy which prevailed against Pyrrhus and Hamilcar.

On such a day we may suppose that the patriotic enthusiasm of a Latin poet would vent itself in reiterated shouts of *Io tri-*

umphe, such as were uttered by Horace on a far less exciting occasion, and in boasts resembling those which Virgil put into the mouth of Anchises. The superiority of some foreign nations, and especially of the Greeks, in the lazy arts of peace, would be admitted with disdainful candor; but pre-eminence in all the qualities which fit a people to subdue and govern mankind would be claimed for the Romans.

The following lay belongs to the latest age of Latin ballad-poetry. Nævius and Livius Andronicus were probably among the children whose mothers held them up to see the chariot of Curius go by. The minstrel who sang on that day might possibly have lived to read the first hexameters of Ennius, and to see the first comedies of Plautus. His poem, as might be expected, shows a much wider acquaintance with the geography, manners, and productions of remote nations, than would have been found in compositions of the age of Camillus. But he troubles himself little about dates, and having heard travellers talk with admiration of the Colossus of Rhodes, and of the structures and gardens with which the Macedonian kings of Syria had embellished their residence on the banks of the Orontes, he has never thought of inquiring whether these things existed in the age of Romulus.

NOTES

As Macaulay explains in his Preface, the poem is a vision of the future glory of Rome which is put into the mouth of the blind seer and poet Capys, and is delivered to encourage Romulus just as he is leaving Alba Longa to found the city of Rome. It is a series of pictures in which the long and glorious history of the City is presented. Macaulay may have derived the main idea of the poem from the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, lines 756, following, in which Vergil tells how Anchises leads his son Aeneas and the Sibyl likewise amid the assembled murmurous throng of the underworld, and mounts a hillock whence he might scan all the long ranks and learn their countenances as they come. Then comes a long list of names famous in the history of Rome.

TITLE.—For an explanation of the supposed occasion of the Lay, see Macaulay's Preface to the poem, especially pp. 107, 109, 111.

—**The Year of the City CCCCLXXIX.** B. C. 274.

LINES 1-2.—**Amulius . . . Sylvian.** Amulius was the great-uncle of Romulus and Remus. He usurped the kingdom of their grandfather Numitor, and was slain by them.

3-4.—**Alba Longa . . . Aventine.** Aventinus was an early king of the city of Alba Longa, or the mother-city of Rome. Hence it is said that the Roman throne is the throne of Aventine.

5-6.—**Camers. . . words of doom.** The pontiff who declared that the children of Rhea Sylvia, Romulus and Remus, were to be thrown into the Tiber and that she should be buried alive. According to Vergil she was cast into the river and was saved by the river god.

9.—**Alba's lake.** A famous lake on the Alban mount, now called Lago di Albano.

86.—**Rhea's boys.** Romulus and Remus.

110.—**Tartessian mine.** Of or from Tartessus, a town of Spain, noted for its mines.

116.—**Sidon.** A celebrated city of Phoenicia, the mother-city of Tyre. It was famous for its purple. See note to line 171.

123.—**War-god's loins.** Romulus and Remus were the sons of Mars.

130.—**Vesta's sacred fire.** Vesta was the goddess of flocks and herds and of the household in general. The fire sacred to her was kept burning by the Vestal virgins, of whom Rhea was one.

149.—**Pomona.** The goddess of fruit and fruit-trees.

150.—**Liber.** A Roman deity, who presided over planting and the vine. His common name is Bacchus.

151.—**Pales.** The deity of shepherds and cattle.

153.—**Venus.** The goddess of love.

169.—**Campanian.** The Campania was a fertile district to the south of Rome, and because of its richness was supposed to lead to luxurious habits of life.

171.—**Tyre.** A celebrated city of Phoenicia, famous for its purple.

173.—**Carthage.** The famous African rival city of Rome. It was celebrated for its commerce and shipping.

175.—**Nymphs.** Demi-goddesses, who inhabit the sea, woods, mountains, fields, and fountains.

177-184.—**pilum, etc.** The *pilum* is the heavy Roman javelin. The other details of this stanza are the special glories of Rome in the arts of war.

185.—**Volscian.** The most important tribe in Latium, conquered by Rome. With this line begins the long list of Roman victories and triumphs.

187.—**Capua.** The chief city of Campania in Southern Italy, celebrated for its wealth and luxurious life. It was conquered by Rome.

189.—**Lucumoes.** This refers to the conquest of the Etruscans by Rome. *Lucumo* is an Etruscan word for chief, or leader.

191.—**Samnite.** Samnium was an ancient country near Latium, inhabited by a race famous for its hardiness and courage.

193.—**Gaul.** The Romans conquered the Gauls, under the leadership of Marcus Furius. See note to line 251 of *Virginia*.

197-205.—**Greek . . . Epirotes.** Pyrrhus came with his army from Epirus in Greece. He used elephants in this war (ll. 199-204).

207.—**Tarentum.** A city of Sicily. *False*, because though it was an Italian city it furnished aid to the Greek invaders. See pp. 108, 109.

230.—**Red King.** Pyrrhus. The Greek form of the name means "Red-headed."

232.—**Is not the gown washed white?** See Macaulay's Preface to this poem, p. 108.

249.—**Manius Curius.** See Macaulay's Preface to this poem, pp. 109, 110.

257.—**Rosea.** A fertile district in Italy, noted for its agriculture.

259.—**Mevania.** A city in Umbria. Its modern name is Bevagna.

266.—**Suppliant's Grove.** The grove attached to the Temple of Jove on the Capitoline Hill. It was in the hollow between the two summits of the Hill.

268.—**Capitolian Jove.** The great statue of Jove in the Temple of Jove.

270.—**Corinth.** The city is situated on the isthmus of Corinth and overlooks the bays of Corinth and Salamis.

271-2.—**King of Day . . . Rhodes.** The gigantic statue at Rhodes, dedicated to the sun. It was one of the seven wonders of the world.

273.—**Orontes.** Antioch, the famous ancient city of Syria, was situated on the river Orontes, a famous river of Syria.

280.—**Byrsa.** The citadel of Carthage. It is identified with the Biblical Bozra.

283.—**morning-land.** The East.

285.—**Atlas.** The mountains of North-western Africa. The mountains are named after the giant Atlas, who is said to have stood near the straits of Gibraltar when he supported the world.

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